Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Corporate Services
Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch

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Review of Departmental Research Activities
Getting Value From Research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report presents the findings of a review undertaken by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) of research activities of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). It describes current research activities, explains the review approach and methodology, and presents findings and recommendations.

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

A 1995 federal task force report (*Strengthening Our Policy Capacity*) recommended departmental reviews of policy research capabilities to focus research activities on the achievement of specific results. This, and DIAND's 1996 "Resourcing our Priorities" (ROP) exercise and the annual *Framework for Action* planning process, were the catalysts for undertaking this review of departmental policy research capabilities. The Terms of Reference in Annex 1 were approved by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee in March 1997.

REVIEW APPROACH AND SCOPE

The review was directed by a Senior Evaluation Manager from DAEB in conjunction with an Advisory Committee comprising representatives of departmental sectors. The committee provided assistance and feedback regarding the overall direction, methods, and scope of the review. The review was carried out in phases, commencing with planning, and followed by instrument development, field work and analysis of findings.

The scope of the review is multi-sectoral because most areas within the department either use or produce research or "create intelligence" for other areas of responsibility to utilize. The review examined the research activities of headquarters and selected regional offices and sought the participation of Aboriginal people, northerners and academic researchers to gather perspective from outside the department regarding the value-added of departmental activities around research and intelligence building.

REVIEW ISSUES

The following issues are identified in the Terms of Reference as the central questions to be addressed. Issues 1 and 2 were addressed in part in the planning phase.

Issue 1: What are the department's research objectives, in the context of its operating environment? How is research used in the department's policy-development processes?

Issue 2: What are the research activities of the department, and how are they managed? What types of research are produced and disseminated?

Issue 3: To what extent are the current organizational structure and processes adequate? To what degree are research activities meeting the department's short- and long-term policy needs?

Issue 4: Is our research planned with and used by our First Nations partners?

Issue 5: What constraints do users and producers of research face and what are some best practices in overcoming them? (e.g., coordination of research, access and availability of data, consultation, quality management, ethical practices, etc.)

Issue 6: What improvements can be made to obtain better value through the department's research activities (e.g., performance measures, results sharing and dissemination etc.)?

REVIEW METHODOLOGIES

Several methodological tools were employed to address the review issues. The lines of inquiry were: interviews with DIAND headquarters officials; visits to DIAND regional offices; interviews with officials from other federal departments; case studies of research inputs to policy; a written questionnaire for all DIAND directors; on-site visits to Aboriginal and northern research organizations and the Indian Claims Commission; telephone interviews with Aboriginal organizations, tribal councils and First Nation governments; an overview of best practices in claims research; and, a discussion group with experts in Aboriginal research.

Multiple lines of evidence were employed in the review to deal with the decentralized nature of DIAND research. Findings in this review are supported by two or more lines of evidence. The concurrence of multiple lines of evidence increases confidence in the validity of findings. Given the lack of previous studies of a similar nature to use as a model, the planning phase of this review involved an extensive literature review to identify research performance indicators and methods.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

The review found that senior policy officials and First Nation partners rely a great deal upon Departmental research in the decision-making process. Ensuring that research is done properly is viewed as an important aspect of the Department's ability to manage risk. To this end, in-person and written questionnaire respondents noted that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of DIAND's research. The review found that there is an increasing demand for long-term strategic research on the part of Departmental and First Nation officials, particularly in the area of program and service delivery. Respondents noted that the need for internal-departmental capacity to address research needs will continue into the future. The review found that there is also a need to enhance First Nations' policy capacity by facilitating their research capacity. The increased policy and programming responsibilities assumed by First Nations as a result of devolution and community based funding initiatives have heightened the need to build capacity among First Nations' related organizations to undertake research, particularly in program areas such as education, and social and economic development.

The review found that DIAND is generally obtaining value from its research. For example, in examining the impacts of 20 operational and policy initiatives it was found that in 50% of the cases the research lead to new policies or changes to existing policies, in addition to developing aboriginal expertise in 30% of the cases, and raised the profile of the issue under examination in 60% of the cases. Of the written questionnaire respondents who had an opinion, 70% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall value realized from departmental research activities. A

number of specific means by which the Department is obtaining value for its research are noted. Among these include best practices in claims research. For example, joint research initiatives being undertaken by the Claims and Indian Government Sector stands out as a best practice in establishing economies of scale while promoting a partnership approach to dealing with potentially adversarial issues. The review also notes areas where further value can be realized by the Department such as increased inter-departmental coordination to address Canada's research needs and the need for better socio-economic impact data to enhance the Department's and its First Nation partners ability to undertake quality research on programming issues.

DIAND research objectives and the use of research in policy development

DIAND's overall research objectives are: to support departmental strategic policy development; to support operational requirements for implementing policies and programs; to support the capacity of partner governments, organizations and individuals to produce research related to DIAND's mandate; and, to produce timely, relevant and accurate information for public use.

DIAND is seen as having a strong commitment to research, and that research has added a strategic focus to executive policy decision-making. Many mechanisms exist to target research to priorities, although there is room for improvement in communications between users and producers of research. While there is support for stronger linkages between strategic research and short-term policy development, the review encountered many examples of research supporting operational, financial and programming needs. The major constraints in linking research with policy needs are time, budgets and the absence of an integrated, comprehensive Departmental research plan.

Management, production and dissemination of DIAND research

In terms of the management of departmental research, the issue of data sources and needs was noted as a particular concern. Respondents identified the need for community based, socio-economic impact data. At the same time, however, it was noted that the Department collects a substantial amount of data on program outputs and that these data are not used as effectively as they could be. Data gaps exist and there should be continued coordination between users of the data and those responsible for its collection and maintenance.

In terms of the Department's research agenda, there is a high level of dissatisfaction among Departmental officials spoken to during the course of the review in terms of the policy areas addressed. Reasons for dissatisfaction included too much research on specific topics such as a particular claim or agreement where adversarial processes require substantive amounts of research be conducted by both parties, lack of a conceptual framework to define what the business is and the associated research needs in various fields, and the need to better share research outputs between sectors. The focus group of academics conducted as part of the review identified areas which the Department should focus its long-term strategic research agenda. Among these include: sustainability in areas such as economic, social, cultural and the environment; community indicators; and, governance, education, and capacity building. Education is viewed as a key for First Nations to exercise self-government and increased research in this area is viewed as an important means to facilitate this.

In terms of dissemination of research, the review found that published DIAND research is readily

accessible through various communication channels, but information on unpublished research results and research in progress is less accessible. The review found concerns about timely access to DIAND research among Aboriginal organizations and First Nations communities.

Public awareness of Aboriginal issues has been improved as a result of DIAND's research.

Adequacy of the current organizational structure and processes and the degree to which research activities meet the department's short- and long-term policy needs

There is a high degree of confidence that individual sectors have sufficient internal research capacity and expertise to meet sectoral short-term policy needs, but less certainty about the sufficiency of broad-based cross-sectoral research to support policy decision-making at the departmental level. Departmental sectors would generally support increased coordination of research activities in a centralized manner, but, at the same time, would be reluctant to give up their internal research capacity.

A majority of officials believe that more strategic research would be beneficial to policy development, but recognized the need to place this in the context of budgetary realities.

In the end, most officials did not consider DIAND's organizational structure to be an issue. The review found no compelling evidence to suggest any modifications to the current organizational structure to optimize linkages between research and policy decision-making; however, other means need to be explored to optimize the integration of research activities.

Involvement of First Nations partners

There was strong evidence that Aboriginal research partnerships have improved the quality of DIAND research products, and that such partnerships are most effective when established early in the process before the agenda has been set. The importance of mutual respect and trust was highlighted throughout the review, both by First Nations and DIAND representatives.

The review encountered many positive comments on the benefits to be realized from meaningful partnerships, notably in the Claims area, where joint research models have recently broken the logjam in several different processes. In addition, research partnerships have helped to build capacity and provide economic opportunities within northern and Aboriginal communities Departmental research activities were also credited with stimulating further research within Aboriginal communities and organizations.

Constraints and best practices

The review identified a variety of constraints faced by users and producers of research. For example, there was concern among some regional officials that they have insufficient input to the strategic research agenda. First Nations and regional DIAND officials expressed a desire to be better informed on the results of unpublished research or work in progress. Throughout this

review report, such constraints are not left to stand alone, but are instead presented in the context of solutions. The review encountered a number of ideal approaches or "best practices" which have been demonstrated or recommended to overcome the potential constraints.

Various keys to ensuring quality research and effective research management include a clear business need for research, definition of objectives and research gaps; peer review of research and partnering; being attentive to client needs; team-building by bringing together officials from different areas; maximizing the impact of research results through sharing information; and ensuring strong regional linkages through open communication from the earliest planning stages through to dissemination of results.

CONCLUSIONS

The review found that DIAND achieves good value from its research efforts, but that various steps should be taken to ensure that these benefits continue. In some areas, there is a challenge to remove impediments to further progress. DIAND should build upon its accomplishments to date and strengthen its relationships both with its Aboriginal partners and in the federal arena.

There is a need for a visible and transparent process to identify research priorities deriving from DIAND's medium and long-term strategic vision. Such a process, to succeed, must have executive commitment from all sectors and regions, and be fully consultative. This would increase the profile of research throughout planning, conduct, dissemination of results and interpretation for policy purposes.

A substantive research capacity within DIAND rests upon the accessibility of current and easy to use Aboriginal socioeconomic impact data, while better utilizing existing data related to program outputs. This has been a serious weakness and it will remain so until Aboriginal communities and organizations can be convinced of the critical importance of such data to successful policy development. DIAND faces a major challenge in working alongside other federal departments and Aboriginal communities to gather and analyze such data. The Department and other federal departments must demonstrate the benefits of better information to the communities.

There is a need to strengthen DIAND's ability to carry out longer-term research of general applicability, while at the same time address community level policy capacity by enhancing their ability to conduct research. There is strong support at senior levels and outside DIAND for addressing these needs through supporting strategic research to be undertaken by First Nations organizations.

It is recommended that:

1. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a process whereby each sector and region of the Department prepare an annual research plan to be used in turn as input to a integrated department-wide annual research plan. Plans should address completed, current and future research. The process for preparing such a plan should involve the executive level.**

2. **DIAND adopt as a standard mode of operation research partnership arrangements, particularly with First Nations communities and organizations.**

3. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a review of potential institutional models to facilitate the coordination, identification, maintenance and collection of relevant and current socio-economic impact/performance data on Aboriginal peoples with other federal departments and Aboriginal partners. Such a review should build upon the work undertaken in this area by Fiscal Relations.**

4. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction and the ADM, Socio-Economic Policy, Programming and Program Redesign undertake a needs assessment for appropriate institutional arrangements for conducting research in partnership with First Nations. The purpose of such institutions is to address both DIAND's and First Nations need for long-term strategic policy research regarding programming and service delivery issues, and to support the policy and research capacity of First Nations. These arrangements should build First Nations capacity to manage their responsibilities for the delivery of programs and services.**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report presents the findings of a review undertaken by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) of research activities of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). It includes a description of current research activities, a summary of the review approach and methodology, and review findings and recommendations.

1.2 Purpose of the Review

A 1995 federal task force report (entitled *Strengthening Our Policy Capacity*) recommended that all departments review their policy research capabilities with the objective of focussing their research activities on the achievement of specific results. The ideas of the Task Force were reinforced by DIAND's 1996 "Resourcing our Priorities" (ROP) exercise which was intended to raise important questions about how best to improve the way DIAND conducts its core business. The ROP exercise highlighted the importance of examining departmental research activities and led to the development of an annual planning process known as the *Framework for Action* which specifies the department's immediate priorities. These exercises were the catalysts for undertaking this review of departmental policy research capabilities.

In this regard, the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee approved the proposed review Terms of Reference under the authority of the Deputy Minister. These terms of reference are presented in Annex 1.

2. REVIEW APPROACH AND SCOPE

The review was directed by a Senior Evaluation Manager from DAEB in conjunction with an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from each sector of the Department and one region. The role of the Advisory Committee was to provide assistance and feedback regarding the overall direction, methods, and scope of the review. A "phased approach" was utilized, commencing with a planning report which described departmental research activities. The "review" phase moves from description to analysis of the issues, employing methodologies to gather evidence described in Section 4.

The scope of the review is multi-sectoral given that few areas of the department are exempt from either using or producing research or "creating intelligence" for other areas of responsibility to utilize. The review examined the research activities of headquarters and selected regional offices and sought the participation of First Nations to gather an extra-departmental perspective regarding the value-added of departmental activities around research and intelligence building.

3. REVIEW ISSUES

The following issues are identified in the Terms of Reference as the central questions to be addressed. The first two issues were addressed in part in the planning phase.

Issue 1: What are the department's research objectives, in the context of its operating environment? How is research used in the department's policy-development processes?

Issue 2: What are the research activities of the department, and how are they managed? What types of research are produced and disseminated?

Issue 3: To what extent are the current organizational structure and processes adequate? To what degree are research activities meeting the department's short- and long-term policy needs?

Issue 4: Is our research planned with and used by our First Nations partners?

Issue 5: What constraints do users and producers of research face and what are some best practices in overc ing them? (e.g., coordination of research, access and availability of data, consultation, quality management, ethical practices, etc.)

Issue 6: What improvements can be made to obtain better value through the department's research activities (e.g., performance measures, results sharing and dissemination etc.)?

4. METHODOLOGIES UTILIZED IN THIS REVIEW

Several methodological tools were employed to address all aspects of the review issues. The nine lines of inquiry were: interviews with DIAND headquarters officials; visits to DIAND regional offices; interviews with officials from other federal departments; case studies of research inputs to policy; a written questionnaire for all DIAND directors; on-site visits to Aboriginal research organizations and the Indian Claims Commission; telephone interviews with Aboriginal organizations, tribal councils and First Nation governments; an overview of best practices in claims research; and, a discussion group with experts in Aboriginal research.

Multiple lines of evidence were employed in the review methodology to deal with the decentralized nature of the Department's research function. Findings from this review are supported by two or more lines of evidence. The concurrence of multiple lines of evidence serves to increase confidence in the validity of findings.

The following sections describe each line of inquiry used along with the level of coverage achieved.

4.1 Departmental Headquarters Interviews

Interviews were conducted with executive and senior managers and other selected officers within each departmental sector at headquarters. Executive and senior officials were interviewed to discuss strategic/public policy research activities including how research is planned and linked with major departmental priorities. Operational officials were interviewed on a broader range of topics dealing with the production and use of research. Table 1 shows the distribution of officials interviewed at headquarters.

Table 1: DIAND Headquarters Officials Interviewed

Sector	Executive	Senior	Operational	Total
Deputy Minister's Office	1			1
Policy & Strategic Direction	1	4	4	9
Socio-Economic Policy & Programming	1	3		4
Lands & Trust Services	1	1	3	5
Claims & Indian Government	1	4	1	6
Northern Affairs	1	4	1	6
Corporate Services	1	3		4
Totals	7	19	9	35

4.2 Regional Reviews

Three regional offices were visited to gather evidence related to the role of officials in overall departmental research activities and to determine the types of research being conducted at the regional level. Officials were interviewed and a sample of files reviewed in each of the DIAND regional offices in Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. Table 2 summarizes the number of interviews which took place during the regional office visits.

Table 2: DIAND Regional Officials Interviewed

Region	Executive/Senior	Operational	Total
Ontario	3	8	11
British Columbia	2	10	12
Northwest Territories	2	9	11
Totals	7	27	34

4.3 Written Questionnaire for DIAND Directors

A written questionnaire was sent to all DIAND directors at headquarters and to the directors from the three regions selected for regional reviews to obtain their perspectives on Issues 1, 2, 3 and 5. The questions were closed-ended to ensure that results were quantifiable. The original sample consisted of 93 recipients: 68 Directors at headquarters and 25 in the three regions. The sample was subsequently reduced when it was determined that three of the directorates had been created very recently and the positions of Director were still vacant and two other directorates were in the process of being amalgamated. As a result of these changes, the total number of Directors included in the sample was 89, including 64 at headquarters and 25 in the regions.

A total of 74 responses were received, representing a response rate of 83 per cent: 52 responses from headquarters for a response rate of 81 per cent and 22 regional responses representing a response rate of 88 per cent.

4.4 Interviews with Other Federal Government Officials

A select number of interviews was undertaken with representatives of the Policy Research Committee and the Inter-departmental Committee on Aboriginal Information Management. The purpose of these interviews was to assess the types of activities DIAND is undertaking collaboratively with other federal departments and to examine ways in which partnerships can be improved. A total of seven interviews were conducted with members of these committees.

4.5 Policy Input Case Studies

Detailed reviews of a selection of major strategic policy initiatives and operational initiatives were conducted to ascertain the linkages between research and policy outcomes or recommendations, and to determine the role of departmental research in policy and implementation processes. These reviews were brief, focussing on specific questions. Each case study was based on a review of documentation related to the project and one or more interviews with policy analysts or other officials who were involved with the initiative. Table 3 presents an overview of the officials interviewed by region and research type. Table 4 lists the case studies selected for review and indicates the research field, type and departmental sector related to each study.

Table 3: Officials Interviewed for Policy Input Case Studies

Research Type	NCR	Quebec	British Columbia	Yukon	NWT	Total
Strategic Policy	18					18
Operational	10	1	3	2	1	17
Totals	28	1	3	2	1	35

Table 4: Policy Input Case Studies

Research Field	Case Study	Research Type	Sector
Aboriginal Governance	Custom Election Review Inherent Right Policy Yukon Self-Government Negotiation & Implementation	Operational Strategic Operational	Lands and Trust Services Policy & Strategic Direction Yukon Region
Social, Cultural, Education & Demographic	DIAND Youth Strategy Housing Policy Initiative Social Assistance Research Demographic Research Initiative	Strategic Strategic Strategic Strategic	Policy & Strategic Direction Policy & Strategic Direction Policy & Strategic Direction Policy & Strategic Direction
Claims & Historical	Comprehensive Claim - Makivik Offshore B.C. Claims Framework Agreement Specific Claim - Caldwell Comprehensive Claim - Sahtu Dene Specific Claim - Prairie Surrenders	Operational Strategic Operational Operational Operational	Claims & Indian Government Claims & Indian Government Claims & Indian Government Claims & Indian Government Claims & Indian Government
Economic	Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business National Aboriginal Financing Task Force	Strategic Strategic	Policy & Strategic Direction Policy & Strategic Direction
Legal	Legal Research Example	Operational	Claims & Indian Government
Northern Governance & Federal Interest Issues	Nunavut Pre-Implementation Plan	Strategic	Northern Affairs
Northern Sustainable Development	Northern Environmental Regulation - West Kitikmeot-Slave Study	Operational	NWT Region
Indian Lands, Environment & Resources	First Nations Land Management Framework Agreement An Environmental Assessment Process	Strategic Operational	Lands and Trust Services British Columbia Region
Departmental Initiatives, Relations & Management	Management Practices Reviews	Operational	Corporate Services and Quebec Region

4.6 Site Visits to Aboriginal and Northern Research Organizations and the Indian Claims Commission

Four on-site visits were conducted to ascertain the processes in which Aboriginal, Northern and other research organizations are involved with departmental research activities, to determine best practices in research partnering, and to identify and describe alternative models for production and dissemination of research. To this end, the following organizations agreed to participate in the on-site visits:

- Aurora Research Institute
- Indian Claims Commission
- Indian Taxation Advisory Board
- Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Manitoba

4.7 Telephone Interviews with Representatives of Aboriginal Organizations

In order to explore fully the use made by Aboriginal groups of departmental research, telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of First Nation governments, Tribal Councils, national and regional Aboriginal organizations and organizations involved in claims research. 94 First Nation organizations and/or communities were contacted in an effort to complete a target sample of 65 responses. The sample was randomly selected with the exception of the organizations involved in claims research for which at least one organization was selected from each region. Table 5 summarizes the sample of respondents and completion rates.

Table 5: Aboriginal Organizations

Organization	Sample	Completions Target	Interviews Completed	Not Available	Refused	Completion Rate
First Nations	51	30	23	23	5	77%
Tribal Councils	21	10	8	12	1	80%
Claims Research	11	10	6	5	0	60%
National and Regional Organizations	11	10	5	5	1	50%
Total	**94**	**55**	**42**	**45**	**7**	**63%**

4.8 Best Practices in Claims Research Case Studies

A "mini study" of recent claims research projects was undertaken as a result of discussions with representatives from various First Nation organizations and federal officials who had identified several approaches to conducting claims research that could be classified as "best practices". The purpose of this "mini study" was to learn more about these approaches and to derive lessons for future strategies in claims research.

Five examples of innovative approaches to conducting research were selected for additional study. These were:

- Kahkewistahaw First Nation's Specific Claim for its 1907 Surrender
- Michipicoten Pilot Project
- Red Bank First Nation Joint Research Project
- Roseau River First Nation's Specific Claim for its 1903 Surrender
- Indian Claims Commission's Oral History Project

Interviews were held with the Chief and/or legal counsel involved in the project.

4.9 Expert Discussion Group on Future Directions in Aboriginal Research

A discussion on future directions in Aboriginal research was held with a group of Aboriginal researchers, practitioners and academics who have a professional involvement in research and have experience in working with DIAND or other government departments and agencies. The purpose of this discussion group was twofold. First, feedback regarding the preliminary review findings was useful to determine whether Aboriginal perspectives have been included and accurately represented. Second, participants shared their visions of future research agendas for the Government, First Nations and the academic community and appropriate roles for the various sectors.

5. PROFILE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

A comprehensive profile of research activities was prepared in the Phase I Planning Report under separate cover. The purpose of this section is to update the key elements of the profile contained in the earlier document with information obtained during the review phase.

5.1 Background

Since the planning phase of this review, DIAND and other federal departments with Aboriginal responsibilities responded to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples with an action plan for the future, *Gathering Strength*. This action plan expresses a "vision of a shared future for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" that will shape policy development and decision-making within the Department. The four key objectives for action are:

- **Renewing the Partnership** - bringing about meaningful and lasting change in our relationships with Aboriginal people;

- **Strengthening Aboriginal Governance** - supporting Aboriginal people in their efforts to create effective and accountable governments, affirming treaty relationships, and negotiating fair solutions to Aboriginal land claims;

- **Developing a New Fiscal Relationship** - arriving at financial arrangements with Aboriginal governments and organizations which are stable, predictable, and accountable and will help foster self-reliance; and,

- **Supporting Strong Communities, People and Economies** - improving health and public safety, investing in people and strengthening Aboriginal economic development.[1]

Gathering Strength represents the framework for the Government of Canada's agenda for renewal, which is to be implemented in partnership with Aboriginal people.[2] As such, on-going and new research will be moulded by the plan's philosophical basis.

5.2 Objectives of Departmental Research Activities

Research supports the achievement of the department's mandate in different ways. The fact that multiple roles are served by research is not unique to DIAND but is common to many public sector organizations. The discussion below summarizes the major objectives of departmental research functions identified during the planning and review phases.

To Support Departmental Strategic Policy Development

One of the principal objectives of departmental research is to support the development of strategic policy. Research is conducted at a strategic level in various departmental sectors to develop knowledge which allows senior management to make decisions related to the department's strategic objectives. This includes evaluation of the degree to which the department is achieving its objectives and the development of policy options or alternatives to enhance performance.[3]

DIAND's research activities facilitate the development of information to address strategic objectives and priorities. As stated in the *Framework for Action 1997-98*, the department's immediate priorities are:[4]

- implementing self-government;
- improving conditions on reserves;
- achieving and implementing claims settlements;
- facilitating political and sustainable development in the North;
- strengthening partnerships with First Nations and Northerners; and,
- changing DIAND's ways of doing business.

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[1] *Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, 1997, p.2.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[3] *Institutional Assessment: A Framework for Strengthening Organizational Capacity for IDRC's Research Partners*, IDRC, May 1995, pp. 10-11.

[4] *Framework for Action 1997-98*, p.2.

These priorities have provided the general framework for immediate policy efforts. At the same time, these priorities fit into the department's longer-term strategic goals under *Gathering Strength*.

To Support Operational Requirements for Implementing Policies and Programs

A second objective of departmental research is to provide information required to effectively implement government policies and programs. Operational research provides information to support decision-making in the day-to-day management of the department's business. At the same time, various monitoring activities provide feedback on the efficiency of departmental operations. This includes determining the extent to which the organization is making efficient use of human and financial resources, and ensuring that its products and services are relevant to stakeholders. DIAND's research capacity in this area extends throughout the department and through internal monitoring mechanisms, formal audits and evaluations.

To Support the Capacity of Partner Governments, Organizations and Individuals to Produce Research Related to DIAND' s Mandate

Through the provision of grants and contributions to third parties to conduct research, the department seeks to strengthen the research capacity of its partners. This, in turn, provides information to support departmental strategic and operational decision-making.

To Produce Timely, Relevant and Accurate Information for Public Use

An important objective of the research function is to provide timely, relevant and accurate data to fulfil a variety of public information needs. The regular production of statistics, quantitative and qualitative data, and the collection of various secondary sources of information are vital elements of the research function which supports decision-making by both government and stakeholders.

Research Objectives by Sector

Based on information provided in the Directors' written questionnaires, the research objectives of DIAND's sectors can be summarized as follows.

Corporate Services: The objectives of research are to elaborate and strengthen DIAND's accountability framework, in a manner consistent with the move toward self-government. Provides department-wide research support functions as described in Table 6. In addition, research is undertaken to support the internal audit and evaluation function.

Claims and Indian Government: Research is conducted to support the review of comprehensive and specific land claims and as input to policy decisions involving land claims issues. In addition, research is undertaken to ensure a complete record with respect to First Nation statements of claims and to support court actions and positions relating to specific litigation.

Policy and Strategic Direction: The objectives of research are to support Aboriginal policy development through the following activities: production of strategic information; analysis of policy problems; facilitation of interaction among policy developers from various fields; development of models and methods of financing self-government including analysis of the implications of cost sharing with provinces and territories; and, determination of the public environment.

Socio-Economic Policy & Programming & Program Re-design: Research objectives are the support of policy and program evaluation or reviews, and analysis to support policy reform in socio-economic areas.

Northern Affairs: Research objectives include the monitoring of program impacts and effectiveness, and support for program design and modification. There is a mandate to support the conduct and dissemination of Northern scientific research in order to contribute to polar knowledge and benefit Canada as a polar nation. Furthermore, research is undertaken to support environmental issues, resource management, and Aboriginal health and social issues which are particular to the North.

Lands and Trust Services: The objectives of research are to contribute to the resolution of land title questions including interests on revenues, and to allow the Department to respond to inquiries from First Nations and other groups on land statutes and Band elections. In addition, research is undertaken to support operational policy development related to resource issues including the management of oil and gas.

Regions: The research objectives of the Regions are grouped into four main categories. First, information is gathered for input on operational policy including assessment, development and implementation. Second, strategic policy development, including the identification of self-government models and intergovernmental activities, is facilitated by research. Third, research is undertaken to support environmental and natural resource issues in the Regions. Finally, research is undertaken to provide a body of media monitoring material for use by Departmental officials in responding to public priorities.

5.3 Typology of Departmental Research Activities and Research Fields

Typologies of DIAND research activities and research fields were developed during the planning phase for this review. Departmental research was broadly categorized into two types, strategic and operational:

Strategic research is broadly defined as the analysis and interpretation of information in order to support new policy development, departmental priority-setting, planning, and strategic direction. By contrast, ***operational research*** supports ongoing implementation of government policy and programs. Although operational research can be called upon to enlighten strategic or public policy decisions, that is not its primary focus. Similarly, strategic or public policy research occasionally influences policy at a program or service level.

Research support functions include three types of activities. First, various units within the department routinely compile, maintain, and produce statistics and non-interpretive empirical data that are contained in the department's various databases. These information sources are an invaluable resource to support strategic policy development. Information of this type can be demographic, economic, financial or related to other programs. Second, various units within the department provide infrastructure support to the research function. These activities include provision of access to archives and other information sources, and the publication and dissemination of research reports. Such activities are spread across many areas of the department, with some central infrastructure services such as the Kiosk, library, and Internet services. The third major category of research support consists of management functions such as the administration of research funding and research contracts.

Table 6 summarizes the typology of research and research support functions.

Table 6: Typology of Departmental Research

Strategic Research		**Operational Research**
Analysis and interpretation of information to develop strategic or public policy, priority-setting, preparing plans, or making decisions at a departmental level.		Analysis and interpretation of information to develop program policy related to changing or improving the efficiency and/or effectiveness of existing processes or policies.
Research Support Functions		
Production, acquisition, management and reporting of statistics and data.	Library, Kiosk, Internet, publication, dissemination and informatics support.	Processes to administer research funding and research contracts.

To provide an overall framework for analysis, nine main research fields within DIAND were identified:

- Aboriginal Governance;
- Social, Cultural, Educational and Demographic;
- Economic;
- Claims and Historical;
- Indian Lands, Environment and Resources Management
- Legal;
- Northern Governance & Federal Interest Issues;
- Northern Sustainable Development; and,
- Departmental Initiatives, Relations and Management.

Figure 1 places the four key objectives of the *Gathering Strength* initiative in the context of these research fields.

Figure 1 DIAND Research Fields and the *Gathering Strength* Objectives

5.4 The Policy Development Process and Its Relationship to Research

This section describes the departmental strategic and operational policy processes and their relationship to departmental research processes.

Strategic Policy Process

The formulation of broad departmental strategic policy is generally a top-down process where the department takes direction from its Minister and the government. Figure 2 illustrates this top-down process from a macro perspective.

At a strategic level, policy-makers are guided in their decision-making by overarching public policy considerations, which have emerged over the long term in response to First Nation and Crown perspectives. Overall, these considerations can be characterized as enhancing the relationship between the Crown and Aboriginal Peoples, facilitating economic and social renewal, providing the means toward self-government and self-sufficiency, devolution of administrative responsibilities, and creating new systems which improve or maintain financial and administrative accountability between First Nations and government.

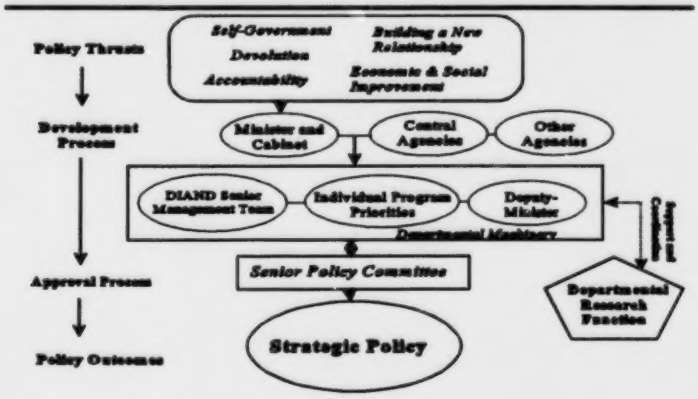
Major strategic policy thrusts generally emanate either from the political level via Cabinet where First Nations and other public organizations have communicated their views or through senior departmental officials who in turn communicate information upward. Such strategic policy issues go from Cabinet into the Departmental "machinery" where alternatives and implementation options are studied and presented to the Minister. In addition, other departments, central agencies and other public institutions may influence DIAND's strategic policy via Cabinet, inter-departmental committees, or other coordination mechanisms.

One such coordination mechanism is the Policy Research Committee (PRC) which was launched in 1996 to create a network of senior federal policy officials and to build a strong foundation of research in support of public policy. The PRC is currently the only such forum where policy ADMs can discuss issues of mutual concern and their departmental research needs.

Approximately four times per year, DIAND's senior management team undertakes an intensive examination of major issues facing the Department by such means as a retreat. In addition, the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister schedule regular senior management meetings to discuss significant departmental decisions. As well, individual program areas communicate upwards ideas for furthering strategic policy objectives. Ultimately, the Senior Policy Committee decides upon the most viable approaches to achieve intended outputs.

The role of departmental research staff is to support the achievement of strategic policy by providing timely, accurate and useful information. At present, specific research projects are assigned to those units which possess the greatest capacity to research particular issues. In this sense, the departmental research function is not centralized. However, the Research and Analysis Directorate has formed a Departmental Research Committee to increase information sharing among departmental researchers. Individual program areas have their own research capabilities to address short-term needs. Challenges requiring longer-term research time frames are generally directed to the Research and Analysis Directorate.

Figure 2: DIAND's Strategic Policy Development Process



Operational Policy Process

Unlike strategic policy, operational policy is most often formulated from within the department. Operational policy encompasses all initiatives intended to design or implement micro level changes to program and service delivery. In many cases, operational policy changes initiate within the program through officials responsible for the policy or through the affected parties such as other areas within the department, First Nations, various levels of government and other stakeholders. Figure 3 illustrates the process.

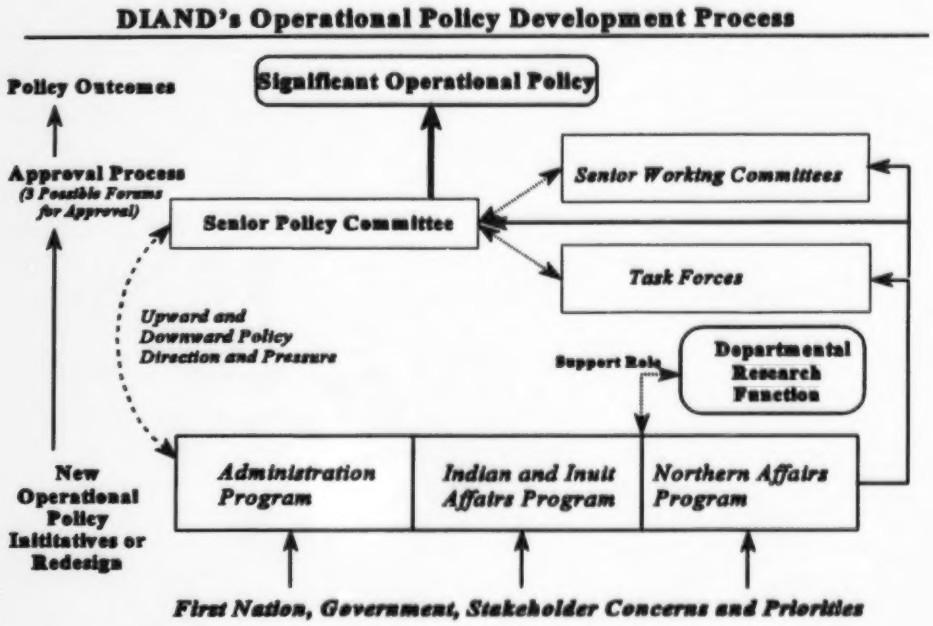


Figure 3

When operational policy amendments are under consideration within DIAND, research is generally initiated to assess impacts, alternatives and implementation strategies. DIAND officials generally rely on *ad hoc* research for short-term operational decision-making.

Major operational policy suggestions are normally submitted to the Senior Policy Committee, after program officials have consulted other departmental areas and the regions.

At the Senior Policy Committee stage, members will decide the appropriate forum to consider operational policy or priority-setting initiatives. Currently, the SPC considers all recommendations as a body, although two other committees have been constituted to address treaty-related and Northern issues. DIAND officials noted that the SPC has considered delegating aspects of its responsibilities due to its increasingly occupied agenda.

5.5 Status of Departmental Research Activities

DIAND's research is highly participatory in nature. The Department's research needs and activities thus require a flexible approach which ensures that all perspectives are represented. Accordingly, a variety of delivery mechanisms are used to carry out research activities. Research is conducted internally by DIAND staff, externally by contractors and, through grants and contribution agreements, by DIAND's partners. This section presents data from information in DIAND's contracts information management system database (CIMS) and data gathered in the review's written questionnaire to DIAND directorates.

According to CIMS data for the period from 1994/95 to 1996/97, the department expended an estimated $9.1 million annually on research related-contracts, representing about 2.5 percent of DIAND's operating budget. Figure 4 gives an overview of expenditures by research field and Figure 5 shows the distribution according to departmental sector. The largest proportions of contracted research expenditures were in legal (25%) and claims research (19%). Northern lands and resources management and northern governance and issues together accounted for about 19% of contract expenditures. Approximately 13% of research addressed department-wide issues such as intergovernmental relations, international issues, departmental dismantling, consultation practices, management practices, human resources, accountability, finance and public opinion. Finally, 25 percent of research contract expenditures was comprised of four different fields of research into Aboriginal affairs: Aboriginal governance, Economic, Social, Cultural, Educational, Demographic and Indian Lands and Resources Management.

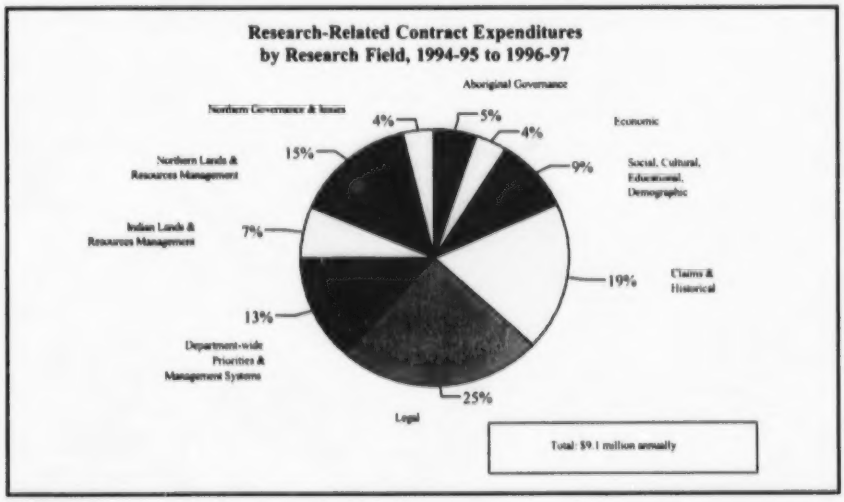


Figure 4

Approximately 29 percent of contracted research expenditures could be described as "strategic" research according to the typology discussed in section 5.3. The remaining 71 percent of contracts could be classified "operational" in nature.

Figure 5 illustrates that all sectors and regions manage some research contracts. The largest producers of research via contracts are: Claims and Indian Government (38%), all Regions (23%), and Corporate Services (20%). During the period, annual increases in research expenditures were observed in the Policy and Strategic Direction and Claims and Indian Government Sectors.

Figure 5

Figure 6 presents information from the written questionnaire on grants and contributions for 1996/97. These data are based on actual responses from headquarters and three sampled regions. Approximately $15 million was allocated to grants and contributions for research at headquarters, while $3 million was spent in the Ontario, B.C. and NWT regions. According to questionnaire respondents, the Claims and Indian Government and Northern Affairs Sectors were responsible for most of the research grants and contribution expenditures.

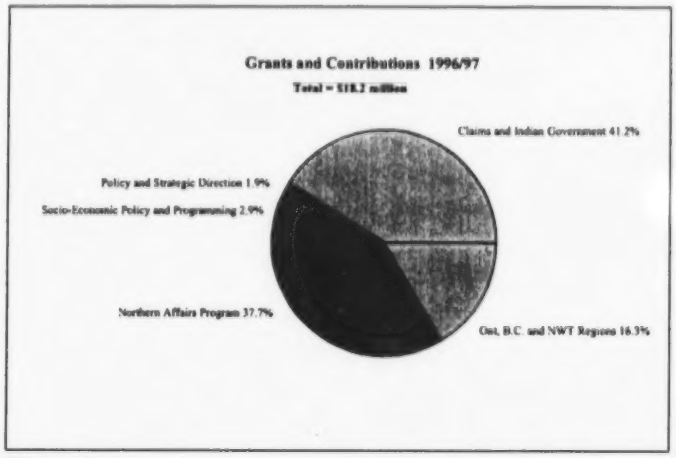

Grants and Contributions 1996/97
Claims and Indian Government 41.2%
Policy and Strategic Direction 1.9%
Socio-Economic Policy and Programming 2.9%
Northern Affairs Program 37.7%
Ont, B.C. and NWT Regions 16.3%

Figure 6

6. REVIEW FINDINGS

6.1 Research Activities for Policy Needs

6.1.1 Targeting Research to Priorities

- ***DIAND has many mechanisms to help ensure that research is targeted to priorities, although the review found some weaknesses in communication between users and producers of research***

- ***The majority of officials believed that more strategic research is necessary, but were uncertain about the availability of funding***

Almost half of the officials interviewed at headquarters believed that research activities were adequately targeted to meet the priorities of their branch and the department as a whole. Most of these respondents referred to activities such as client advisory committees within the Department or with First Nation communities as being useful tools to help targeting. Respondents also noted the need to revisit research plans to ensure they are still relevant and aligned to current priorities. Respondents typically found operational research activities closely aligned with branch priorities.

About one quarter thought research activities were not adequately targeted and one-fifth felt some priorities were adequately targeted by research while others were not. Those giving a negative response believed that research could be better targeted for strategic priorities. They suggested that there is not enough communication between users and producers to ensure an understanding of user needs. Lack of communication between producers of research within the department was also seen to be of some concern. Some respondents believed that there is insufficient awareness of the different kinds of research expertise residing in each sector when policy issues arise. It was not specified as to why respondents believed there is a lack of awareness regarding the types of departmental research.

Evidence from the written questionnaire was less clear, with about two-thirds of respondents rating as neutral their level of satisfaction with the targeting of research to priority needs within the department. Regional respondents were generally less satisfied with research targeting than their headquarters counterparts. This was corroborated during the regional visits, where officials expressed a general view that they were not always fully informed on department-wide issues and therefore unable to assess the effectiveness of targeting.

More than half of headquarters officials interviewed believed that additional strategic research would be beneficial to address DIAND policy development. Funding was seen as the limiting factor by many officials, attributed to what was seen as an absence of a long sustained program of research within the department. This was corroborated by results from the written questionnaire which showed the majority of respondents neutral or dissatisfied with the sufficiency of resources to meet research needs. Many examples were provided of the types of research needed. Respondents noted the need for data to allow for an analysis of trends and for more data at the community level to address issues ranging from education and social services to economic and

resource development. For example, respondents noted a need to understand the economics of Aboriginal communities at one point in time and over time and how these compare to non-Aboriginal communities.

6.1.2 Accessibility of Information

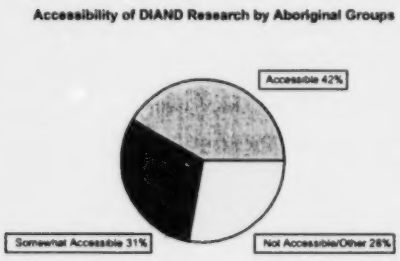
- ***Published departmental research is readily accessible through various communication channels***

- ***Information regarding unpublished research results as well as research in progress is less accessible***

- ***Aboriginal organizations and First Nations communities consider accessibility to DIAND research to be problematic***

Accessibility of information was not regarded as an issue by most of the headquarters officials interviewed. Two-thirds of these respondents believed information to be readily accessible through electronic, library and personal contact networks. Almost half of headquarters Directors responding to the written questionnaire indicated satisfaction with the accessibility of departmental research. This was in sharp contrast to regional respondents of whom only 20 per cent indicated satisfaction.

Regional reviews encountered differing opinions. Officials in the Ontario Region believed that they could generally access departmental research materials, but were not convinced that they had a complete picture of the research being undertaken. This was explained in part by the fact that it not always possible to identify headquarters officials with the appropriate corporate memory. In the Northwest Territories, on the other hand, two-thirds of respondents considered departmental research to be accessible to both internal and external users, but this depends on "knowing what's there." At the same time, most respondents felt that the department's efforts to disseminate research are insufficient.



The review found that while published research is very accessible, work in progress or "grey literature" is much harder to locate, with time usually being the limiting factor. As well, with research activities taking place in various sectors across the Department, it is often more difficult to track down whether the required research has already been undertaken than to access it.

Less than half of the participants in the telephone survey of Aboriginal organizations and First Nation communities considered DIAND research to be accessible. Problems encountered by these respondents when attempting to access departmental information included: time needed to locate documentation; location of DIAND offices; the trial and error process involved in looking for information; and a lack of awareness on the part of DIAND employees as to where research and information can be found. Almost all of the telephone survey respondents were generally unaware of research available at DIAND.

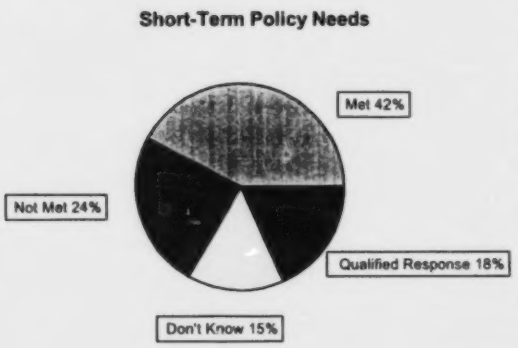
This was also noted by officials from other federal departments, who did not consider accessibility to be an issue for research of which they were already aware. To this group of respondents, the main concern was whether they were aware of the full extent of research conducted at DIAND.

6.1.3 Short-Term Policy Needs

- ***There is a high degree of confidence that individual sectors have sufficient internal research capacity to meet sectoral short-term policy needs, but less certainty about the sufficiency of broad-based cross-sectoral research to support policy decision-making at the departmental level***

- ***There is a sense that insufficient resources are allocated to developing socioeconomic data***

- ***The review found little evidence that short-term policy decision-making incorporates the results of strategic research***



Almost half of headquarters officials interviewed considered research activities to be adequately meeting departmental short term policy needs, at least from the vantage point of the sector in which they work. Most respondents from both the Claims and Indian Government and Northern Affairs sectors believed their sectors to have sufficient research capacity to meet their internal short-term policy needs and expressed a desire to maintain or enhance that capacity.

About the same proportion of respondents either did not think short term policy needs were being met or had mixed views on the question. Those responding negatively were concerned that the big picture was not available for short-term policy decision-making. For example, broad-based research is needed to enhance understanding of the Aboriginal economy and its role in Canada. A few senior officials thought that DIAND was weak relative to other departments in terms of its strategic research capacity and its ability to respond to new problems.

A number of officials related any perceived shortcomings in policy capacity to a lack of availability of timely and easy to use socioeconomic data. Several pointed to difficulties encountered by Statistics Canada in obtaining access to or reliable information on individuals living on reserves. They noted the time lags in obtaining updated statistics from the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey, observing at the time of the review that it was still necessary to rely on information gathered in 1991. Significant changes have taken place since then in the Aboriginal world, and officials expressed an interest in having some means of more accurate tracking of demographic developments.

Respondents noted the traditional difficulties of research support for policy needs. Policy crises tend to occur in the short term while strategic research is a long-term undertaking. Consequently, there was a sense that too much reliance is placed on anecdotal information rather than substantive research. There is also a need to ensure that short-term policy responses are focussed within the larger long-term context, and to ensure that research is equipped to respond to short-term needs.

Officials interviewed in the regional reviews did not cite specific examples of policy needs that had been met through research, but concentrated more on areas where they considered such needs not to have been met.

Both headquarters and regional officials offered their views of situations where, at the time of the review, research either met or did not meet short-term policy needs.

Short-Term Research Policy Needs Met

- demographic research intiative results
- research done for RCAP in the areas of Self-Government and Inherent Right
- revenue studies for tax and non-tax bases which produced different models for funding communities
- research in support of the Healing Strategy
- research results showing demographic impacts on post secondary education and other program budgets
- research on Northern resources management
- policy research on public government in the Western Arctic
- development of public government policy and research skills for Nunavut
- specific claims research in cooperation with the ICC
- research on settlement patterns in the French colonial system - a Supreme Court decision was based on historical research and new negotiation approaches
- review of northern BHP project identified gaps and approaches to policy
- research on land claims and selection of mineral properties
- Delgamuukw research helping to guide approach to claims
- Prairie Surrenders and TLE policy reviews
- social development research

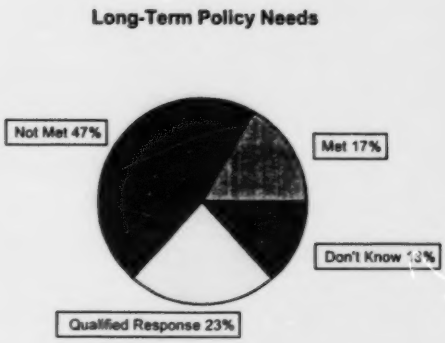
Short-Term Research Policy Needs Not Met

- research on sustainable development with respect to Circumpolar nations
- research on governance and the institutional capacity of governance
- research to rationalize departmental and Statistics Canada databases
- research on residential schools
- research on the implications of the Delgamuukw decision with respect to the types and nature of Aboriginal claims that can be anticipated

6.1.4 Long-Term Policy Needs

- ***The review found significant doubt about DIAND's research capacity to meet its long-term policy needs***

- ***Shortcomings perceived in DIAND's strategic research capacity may be related to a need for stronger linkages between research and the departmental long-term vision in overall corporate planning***



Respondents were less optimistic about the extent to which current research meets the department's long-term policy needs. Approximately two-thirds of headquarters respondents had a negative or mixed response. It was noted that the question of research is not usually raised at Senior Policy Committee. Respondents from the regions were similarly doubtful about the extent to which long-term policy needs are being met by departmental research.

DIAND officials noted the need for more brainstorming. They believed that pressure on the department to put out fires in the short term rarely left time to look down the road for implications to address the broader-based issues.

Respondents believed the department's strategic research capacity would be stronger if there were a planning framework within which strategic needs could be assessed. There was concern that the current research plan might be driven too much by clients in need of short term solutions instead of a clear statement of departmental goals and objectives. One respondent suggested that the research plan should be based on a vision that can be screened against how it supports the criteria for the four *Gathering Strength* themes. On the other hand, some respondents noted that the long-term policy agenda is not defined by DIAND so much as by parameters shaped by external events. They supported the philosophy that research should be more autonomous to allow it to look at the big picture in light of the department's strategic vision.

Respondents suggested that the fault lies on both sides if policy and research linkages are weak. Policy clients must be receptive to hearing research results and supportive of a long-term program of research. Some respondents also feared that contracting out has superseded the development of policy matter experts within the department.

Those respondents who believed long-term policy needs were being met pointed to the extent that the various research centres have been good in forecasting needs despite limited budgets. They felt that strategic research by definition is done for longer-term needs and does not usually have a short-term optic.

The following lists provide examples cited where research has and has not met longer-term policy needs in the opinion of headquarters officials. Interestingly, while officials cited more examples of research meeting than not meeting short-term policy needs, the opposite was the case for long-term policy needs.

Long-Term Policy Needs Met

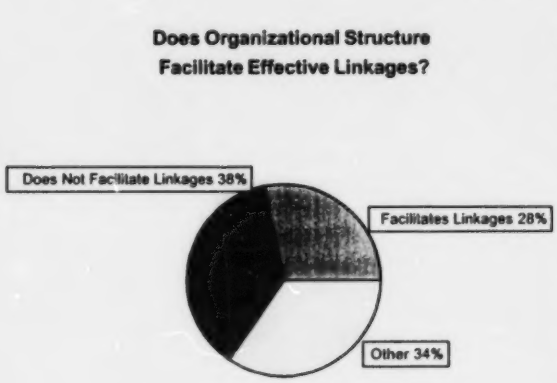
- *Gathering Strength* - background research captured the Aboriginal situation in Canada
- Demographics research conducted internally and with Statistics Canada
  - was critical in getting the agenda through to Cabinet
  - showed population migration onto reserves, considered to be counter-intuitive
  - ramification of massive growth in population will be felt for 40 years in terms of implications for social services and other program infrastructures
- research on contaminants led to a protocol being signed with the European Commission - research set the context for negotiations and for presenting the position to Cabinet
- acid mine drainage research conducted with the territorial governments will in time produce solid information for policy decision making
- housing policy research and post secondary education research supported two Memoranda to Cabinet within a period of four years
- well-positioned with respect to research on northern resource management issues

Long-Term Policy Needs Not Met

- *Gathering Strength* - insufficient research on the meaning and implications of partnerships in the context of central agency requirements
- more research needed to examine what is behind trends - the "why" questions - answers would help to better inform policy making
- softer social issues require more research in both the Indian and Inuit Affairs and Northern Affairs Programs
- Delgamuukw decision - implications for policy are enormous and research should have anticipated possible conclusions and what the policy direction would have to be
- Additions to Reserves policy - research needed with respect to the creation of urban reserves
- Economic development
  - put major resources into financing, but financing might not be the main problem; research might reveal alternative strategies
  - no research available on whether any part of the emerging northern diamond industry ought to be subsidized
- Northern forestry
  - research capacity is in the Yukon regional office but no forestry strategy coming from headquarters
  - lack of good information on growth rates and tree planting
- Water management in the NWT - not enough research to support ongoing licensing decisions
- a court case that brought up an important policy issue in terms of voting by off-reserve people - research needed to look at the implications and ramifications for a variety of departmental policies
- There was limited strategic research in response to Bill C-31 problems recognized in 1984, and more could have been done. As a result, in the medium term there may be significant problems with the *Indian Act* and Self-Government with respect to the control of Band membership
- *Indian Act* versus Self-Government issues - after 150 years, research support is still needed to ensure that we can bring closure to the debate

6.2 Organizational Structure

- ***The review found no compelling evidence to suggest any modifications to the current organizational structure to optimize linkages between research and policy decision-making***
- ***DIAND's research capacity was found to be highly decentralized in servicing corporate and sector needs***
- ***Departmental sectors support increased coordination of research activities in a centralized manner but would be reluctant to give up internal research capacity***
- ***Research linkages were found to be weak both interregionally and between the regions and headquarters***



Less than one-third of headquarters respondents considered DIAND's organizational structure to facilitate effective linkages between research and policy. Almost 40 per cent responded negatively to the question, while another third had mixed responses, including a view that organizational structure is not a key factor in determining the effectiveness of linkages between research and policy. Many respondents targeted communications as being the main ingredient for effective research and policy linkages, arguing that any given organizational structure will not guarantee expedient communication channels. In this respect, it was suggested that a clear articulation of research strategy is more important than organizational issues.

Respondents suggested that mechanisms such as Senior Policy Committee help to facilitate communications across departmental sectors, although there is a need to engender more regional involvement into the policy development process. Other respondents could not see a strong linkage between research and data management and senior level policy decision-making. They suggested that for effective linkages, senior level participation was needed. Officials were not certain how research should fall into departmental committee structures, but observed that it currently seems to be absent at a senior level. However, given the concerns of information and work overload amongst senior officials, it was suggested that having a research committee at a director general level may be more effective and would help to ensure linkages to the thinking stage in policy development.

A number of officials alluded to departmental "stove pipes" (to indicate compartmentalization) when talking about DIAND's organizational structure. Some believed that these were still

present, at least in parts of the organization, whereas others thought this effect had been reduced in recent years. Most respondents were of the opinion that the organizational structure of the sector in which they worked was sound, but that linkages were weak with other sectors and/or the regions. For example, the Northern Affairs Sector has established solid regional linkages but those with the Indian Program are not as visible. Similarly, the Claims and Indian Government Sector was believed to be well integrated with policy development firmly grounded on sectoral research, but departmental linkages were less evident moving out of the sector.

Many respondents commented on the linkages between the department's Research and Analysis Directorate (R&A) and the Corporate Information Management Directorate (CIMD, formerly Information Quality and Research Directorate or IQR). Most officials saw the need for a high level of interaction between these directorates, and, to this end, they are physically located on the same floor. Some officials questioned the rationale, however, for the directorates being split organizationally, with the former reporting to the ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction, while the latter reports to the ADM, Corporate Services. Furthermore, although R&A is part of Policy and Strategic Direction, it is separated physically from the policy development sections of the sector, "two elevators and a tower away".

Many respondents saw a need for research capacity within their respective sectors, noting the importance of having subject matter experts available to advise on policy decisions. Almost all agreed, however, on an equal need for an autonomous strategic research section capable of looking at "big picture" (particularly long-term) issues impacting on the department as a whole.

One-third of the headquarters respondents would maintain the status quo with respect to the organization of the department's various research functions; one-third would suggest more or less integration; and the remaining third either did not know or believed an organizational structure response would not make a difference.

Respondents supporting the status quo did suggest, however, that solutions must be found to improve communications and linkages between policy and research. One suggestion was made that non-policy matters could be shifted away from the most senior levels of the department, leaving the Deputy and ADMs more time to focus on policy and research.

The 22 per cent of headquarters respondents who believed greater integration to be required spoke in terms of maintaining a critical mass in the department's research capacity. More integration was seen as a way to ensure the resources are there for the continuity of research both in terms of funding and corporate knowledge. Those arguing for less integration want to see research capacity where the subject matter experts are. This philosophy was most predominant among Claims and Northern officials, who believed that research expertise and interest are needed to ensure that program needs are being met. Nonetheless, the same respondents recognized that this would underscore the need for a linkage mechanism to ensure that inefficiencies do not occur.

Regional respondents typically had a different perspective on organizational structure from that of their headquarters counterparts. These officials were generally satisfied with the ability of their own regional structures to facilitate effective internal communication. Interregional linkages, however, were seen to be weaker, because there is far less communication between the Regions, except where special initiatives are concerned. The regions are highly autonomous and have minimal regular contact at the working level. Linkages with headquarters were seen to be equally tenuous, with contact limited to participation in special purpose committees or periodic sector meetings. The review found a general lack of knowledge among regional officials about specific research initiatives. In light of the above, regional respondents overall offered no clear views on the effectiveness of the departmental organizational structure in facilitating linkages between policy and research.

6.3 Process

6.3.1 Research Planning

One-half of the interview respondents said research planning and coordination processes were adequate within their sectors and one-third thought some aspects were adequate but improvements could be made to certain areas. While the consultation, planning and coordination processes were considered good for confirming current research agendas, respondents noted that such agendas may not be strategically focussed for long term and broader policy perspectives. They were not certain that there was in place an ongoing research program that would position DIAND to address policy issues five to ten years down the road.

Some respondents said the initial planning and consultation processes of DIAND's Research and Analysis Directorate were good, but that the follow-up was missing. Respondents had positive comments about the development process for the unit's 1996/97 three-year research plan, but were not aware if a similar process had taken place for 1997/98. On the other hand, some respondents believed that by the time they were notified of the plan, it would be difficult to have new research added. Other respondents were not aware of departmental research plans.

As of June 1998, a 1998-2000 research plan has been developed in response to a variety of inputs. The three principal sources for the plan were: a focus gr up held April 28, 1998, comprising senior DIAND managers, representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Indian Taxation Advisory Board, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Moose Deer Point First Nation and Georgina Island First Nation; discussions with senior DIAND executive and policy officials; and major departmental priorities such as the *Gathering Strength* initiative.

DIAND officials noted a department-wide need to create awareness of annual research plans and the research cycle. It was suggested that the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee provided a good example of executive level decision-making and that the research function should have a similar mechanism for confirming the departmental agenda.

6.3.2 Dissemination of Research

The majority of officials interviewed considered internal dissemination of research information to be adequate. Respondents noted that part of the problem in disseminating research results is the limited time client audiences have for reading and absorbing written material and that alternative forms of communicating were important to maximize the impact of research. Respondents indicated that information sessions organized by the Research and Analysis Directorate had been particularly useful in having research results communicated to them. It was noted, however, that while such mechanisms for marketing results have a positive impact, they are highly labour-intensive in terms of preparation and marketing time. Respondents acknowledged the need to balance the allocation of resources between production and dissemination of research.

One-third of headquarters respondents said internal dissemination needs improvement. They had little awareness of what was being produced and where such information could be accessed. Respondents saw a need to boost the profile of research in progress and studies completed and suggested greater communication through senior management committees and more widespread use of the Intranet and departmental library system for working documents.

Responses were evenly split with respect to the external dissemination of departmental research. Respondents thought the DIAND Web site, Kiosk and other internal mechanisms were reasonably effective for documents released for distribution, but believed inefficiencies to be present in getting materials released. Respondents believed that the extent to which information was distributed externally often depended on the comfort level and political sensibilities associated with the subject material. Senior managers were viewed as being very cautious in releasing results that could be interpreted as sensitive. Respondents suggested that where client populations have been appropriately involved in the research process, the trust which has been established often makes clients more comfortable than senior management with sensitive issues. Respondents also saw the need to improve the process to inform First Nations about research being undertaken.

> *People may not love the message, but if you don't get the message out, it's worse because it creates unrealistic expectations.*

Among regional officials there was concern that vehicles such as the departmental Web site were insufficient for communicating scientific research, and that links could be stronger between the DIAND site and other scientific sites on the Internet. The regions typically had their own publications for reaching out to their local client populations, but these were more aligned with current events and operational issues than with results.

6.3.3 Monitoring Research Effectiveness

Research is monitored within most parts of DIAND using processes commonly used in contract management. That is, projects are defined, progress monitored and follow-up is made to ensure objectives and client needs have been met. However, officials provided relatively few examples of monitoring for effectiveness. Respondents suggested that most feedback comes informally through word of mouth, but find such feedback tends to emphasize the positive over the negative.

For the Claims and Indian Government Sector, court cases are monitored to determine the extent to which their research has been used, and officials check for the extent of overlap in documentation between the two sides. As well, managers are charged with ensuring the research is on track, meeting the needs of the lawyers handling the case and being carried out in a cost-efficient manner.

In the Research and Analysis Directorate, research managers experimented with sending a questionnaire to get reactions to their *First Nation Effective Practices* project, but encountered a low response rate. The unit tries to track the number of copies requested for research reports, but Internet accessibility makes it difficult to get an accurate reading on actual demand.

Considerable monitoring of research results takes place within the Northern Contaminants Program and significant resources are devoted to communicating results to Northerners. Follow-up on the effectiveness of these processes was considered spotty due to limited resources.

Other units reported keeping an internal list of demand for specific reports in order to monitor where the interest lies. Respondents noted that research for operational needs normally deals with practical problems and is driven by user satisfaction. Success is measured by whether the problem gets solved.

6.4 Partnerships/Delivery Models

Results from the Directors' written questionnaire revealed that over half of DIAND directorates sampled have collaborated with partners to produce research or to share research information. Of the 74 directorates from headquarters and three sample regions (Ontario, BC, and NWT) that responded to the survey, 38 have been involved in partnerships. The types of partnerships are illustrated in Table 7. There is little difference between headquarters and the sample regions with respect to the percentage of directorates involved in research partnerships, although the regional offices have a greater level of collaboration with provincial/territorial government counterparts.

> *Involving stakeholders can be a catalyst to developing consensus and at the same time a constraint by slowing down the process.*

Table 7: Percentage of DIAND Directorates Involved in Research Partnerships

	DIAND	*HQ*	*Regions*
Aboriginal partners	**71%**	**72%**	**69%**
Other federal departments	**63%**	**64%**	**62%**
Provincial/territorial governments	**42%**	**32%**	**62%**
Academic community	**32%**	**32%**	**31%**
Other DIAND Directorates	**68%**	**68%**	**69%**
Other*	**24%**	**28%**	**15%**

(n=38)

*Other includes: Public service unions, the accounting industry, consulting historians, International organizations, the meta group for information technology, industry, Environmental Non-Government Organizations, and the Indian Claims Commission.

6.4.1 Aboriginal Partnerships

- ***The review found that research partnerships are most effective when established early in the process with a high level of mutual trust***

The message from several lines of evidence was that truly effective partnerships span all stages of the research process commencing with the joint determination of terms of reference. The Directors' written questionnaire revealed that about 20 per cent of the total sample of headquarters directorates and 10 per cent of the sample of regional directorates regularly involved Aboriginal partners in planning research.

Table 8: Aboriginal Partners Involvement in Planning Departmental Research Activities

Sector	Total Responses	Regularly	Occasionally	Not at All	Total
Headquarters	23	43%	30%	26%	100%
Regions	13	15%	46%	38%	100%
All DIAND	36	33%	36%	31%	100%

The review found numerous examples of innovative methods in planning and undertaking departmental research activities with DIAND's Aboriginal partners. Regardless of the type of project or the subject matter of the research, there is strong evidence that successful partnerships are most likely to occur in an environment in which mutual trust has been established. Trust and cooperation make for a good research process. With Aboriginal interests increasingly driving the agenda, DIAND will find cooperation rather than control being the guiding strategy in its approach to research.

Partnerships must be based on mutual respect and trust.

Innovative Approaches to Collaborative Research

The following points summarize some of the innovative approaches to collaborative research that DIAND has undertaken with its Aboriginal partners.

- The ***Research and Analysis Directorate*** has formed partnering arrangements with the ***United Anishnaabeg Councils*** and the ***Indian Taxation Advisory Board*** to co-steer four separate research projects. These projects examine how First Nations can generate own-source revenues to help defray the costs of self-government. Two of the projects are regionally-focussed and two have a national perspective. The research projects are managed by a two-person steering committee consisting of a senior DIAND research manager and a senior Aboriginal representative, each of whom is supported and advised by stakeholder groups from their own organizations. The steering committee is responsible for developing project statements of work, selecting contractors, guiding the work in progress and commenting on and editing the research.

  The Directorate also conducted a series of case studies of research practices in Aboriginal communities, businesses and organizations. The report, *First Nations Effective Practices*, was sent to all Bands in Canada. This study represents a significant departure from demographic-based research which often painted bleak pictures, and instead focussed on the success stories and contributions made by Aboriginal peoples.

  The Directorate held a focus group on April 28, 1998 to discuss research needs both within DIAND and for Aboriginal stakeholders. Participants included senior departmental officials, representatives of Aboriginal organizations and selected First Nations. The focus group was designed to provide input into the Directorate's research planning process to ensure the relevancy of proposed research activities.

  In addition to these approaches to partnering, the Directorate tries to ensure that projects are contracted out to Aboriginal consultants.

- A significant amount of ***claims research*** is being undertaken collaboratively, and innovative approaches are being tested as an alternative to the costly adversarial research process to getting a claim accepted for negotiation. By jointly preparing documents for review by the Department of Justice (DOJ), DIAND is seen as working with, rather than against, the interests of the First Nation. The Department is also viewed as trying to "fix the past", which is helping to build the trust necessary for a true partnership to emerge.

  Innovative models include the ***Michipicoten Pilot Project***, which is introducing an approach to resolving multiple land claims by a single First Nation and is founded on the principle of cooperation. With the ***Indian Claims Commission*** acting as a neutral process facilitator, the Michipicoten First Nation and the Department are working together to research, identify and resolve specific land claims. The first of the pilot project's two phases saw Michipicoten First Nation and DIAND together establishing the terms of reference for research and selecting a researcher. Both parties meet regularly to review and assess findings until the research is completed and then prepare a joint submission to DOJ. The second phase begins if Canada accepts the claim(s) for

negotiation, at which time the parties establish another joint Protocol Agreement for the negotiation, ratification and implementation of the accepted claim(s). The pilot project's research is mostly archival.

In another joint research project, DIAND and ***Red Bank First Nation*** decided to work together to determine the facts pertaining to the Bands' specific claim. A project team was formed comprising Band Council members, the Band lawyer, Regional DIAND representatives, and two officials from Headquarters Specific Claims Branch, and a researcher was selected who was mutually agreed upon by all parties. The independent researcher compiled information for review every two months by the project team. Funding for this joint project was provided by DIAND.

In 1991, the ***Mohawk Council of Kahnawake*** began a joint project with DIAND to undertake research for its comprehensive claim. The Band Council and community were dissatisfied with the existing framework for claims because the onus for proof is placed on the native side which, according to a Band representative, is usually disadvantaged in terms of technical skills. As a result of taking a joint approach to the research using a mutually acceptable consultant, the resulting product was considered to be of higher quality than if the research had not been undertaken collaboratively.

Partnership with DIAND is seen as challenging when the two parties invariably have different points of view. Officials from the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Manitoba suggested that First Nations are usually the junior partner when working together with Canada. They were more optimistic about the likelihood of success when working together on factual-type documents. In such circumstances, interpretations may differ, but the facts should be indisputable. There was optimism that more partnerships in this vein would accelerate the claims process overall.

> *Our interests in factual research should be the same as DIAND's. The bottom line is that we want to have a level playing field.*

- Under the ***Arctic Environmental Strategy*** and continuing in the ***Sustainable Development Strategy*** and ***Northern Contaminants and Food Mail*** research programs, the Northern Affairs Sector has developed numerous innovative approaches to partnering with Aboriginals and Northerners. Formal committee structures comprised of representatives of Aboriginal organizations, territorial governments, non-government organizations and other concerned federal departments are active in both regions. These committees are responsible for determining research priorities, project selection and program implementation. Partnerships forged under these programs have built in a high level of trust, with Aboriginal partners truly sharing decision-making with DIAND officers.

The approach taken in Northern Affairs programs recognizes the need to build capacity within communities. The sector is supportive of alliances between Northern and Southern academic institutions for the granting of joint degrees as well as the establishment of a University of the Arctic.

- The ***Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB)*** routinely includes Aboriginal representatives on its ***advisory committees*** for evaluations of departmental programs and initiatives. Advisory committees are responsible for guiding evaluations from the planning phase through to completion of the evaluation/review report. Respondents felt that such representation helps to bring about recommendations which are workable.

- ***Communications Branch*** is working with the ***Assembly of First Nations*** to develop improved communications strategies. As well, the branch keeps an active list of Aboriginal consultants in communications and has increased its use of Aboriginal firms in contracted work.

- In the ***B.C. Region***, the ***First Nations Education Steering Committee*** (FNESC) was established in May 1992 at a provincial meeting of First Nations educators, leaders and technicians. Many Committee members came forward to volunteer their time in the pursuit of quality education for First Nations learners. The Committee has depended on voluntarism and its support network has grown extensively. With some contract dollars from the DIAND Region and major cooperative efforts from more than 20 First Nations and Tribal Councils, the FNESC's coordinated efforts have been the driving force behind 30 regional workshops, several education conferences, extensive consultations and significant research. Its long-term strategic goal is to develop potential governance models for education in British Columbia's First Nation community. The Committee released a major discussion paper in April 1997, and this paper discusses key concepts in First Nations approaches to control and jurisdiction, the foundation for First Nations control and jurisdiction over First Nations education, resourcing issues which are addressed through treaties, and various options.

- The review of the ***Northwest Territories Region*** found an excellent example of collaboration between Aboriginal leaders and DIAND representatives from various sectors. The ***Western NWT Governance Project*** focuses on policy issues concerning alternative structures of government for the Western NWT. Aboriginal leaders initiated the project and participate through the Aboriginal Summit, with support from a small secretariat. The project is intended to act as a forum to facilitate creative thinking about governance issues without prejudicing future negotiations. Internally, DIAND has an *ad hoc* Working Group on the Western NWT which includes representatives from the NWT Region and three sectors at headquarters.

6.4.2 Interdepartmental Committees

- ***Broad-based, collaborative research is recognized within the federal government as the key to effective policy development***

- ***Interdepartmental committees provide an opportunity for departments with limited research capacity to benefit from the input and support of more highly resourced departments***

Policy Research Committee

The Policy Research Initiative was launched in July 1996 to identify and examine pressure points likely to be experienced by Canadian society over the ensuing decade. The ultimate objective for this initiative is to build a solid foundation of research to support the development of public policy. Over 30 federal departments and agencies are represented in a network under the aegis of the Policy Research Committee (PRC) and its various sub-committees. A Secretariat was set up in 1997 to serve the Steering Committee, comprised of the PRC co-chairs, the co-chairs of four interdepartmental networks: Growth; Global Challenges and Opportunities; Social Cohesion; and Human Development, one representative from the Knowledge-based Economy and Society Pilot Project and one official from PCO. The Steering Committee meets quarterly and advises on policy research projects, reviews gaps in data and research, determines priorities, and promotes the PRC and its activities domestically and abroad.

The PRC is the only current vehicle for bringing together policy ADMs to discuss issues of mutual concern. DIAND participates in the Social Cohesion network, which has a diverse range of research revolving around three themes: society's fault lines, axes of community and implications of changes in social cohesion.

The review found that one of the major challenges in such a large network of departments is to stimulate interest among the departments with the most research capacity in issues of importance to those with fewer resources and less capacity. Given the expansive budgets of departments such as Finance, Health and HRDC, DIAND must bring issues to the table which capture the interest of the larger agencies in pursuing legal, fiduciary and cultural matters of importance to the Aboriginal policy agenda. Although officials conceded that such committees are generally not the appropriate vehicle for research partnering, they noted that the sharing of information could well stimulate enough interest in DIAND's agenda to foster partnerships. The officials interviewed saw the quality of DIAND research as quite high, and opined that issues of regional sensitivity and gender might form the basis for future research partnerships between DIAND, First Nations and other federal departments.

> *There is a critical mass below which any cuts to smaller departments' research resources would be devastating.*

Interdepartmental Committee for the Discussion of Aboriginal Information Management Issues

The interdepartmental committee was established in 1995 to "facilitate the exchange and sharing of information among participating departments and Aboriginal organizations" and "to minimize overlap and duplication of data collected." The committee's membership currently comprises representation from 12 federal departments[5] and three Aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the National Association of Friendship Centres. The committee meets quarterly to share information on best practices and existing information and databases. The committee has shown leadership in dealing with the issues of territoriality and data ownership, which have often been an impediment to the flow of information between government departments and Aboriginal organizations. The committee has produced an Aboriginal data inventory entitled *Gateway to the Future*, which identified 95 data holdings among federal departments and Aboriginal organizations. The committee is currently exploring the operational aspects of setting up a Web site to be known as *Gateway to Aboriginal Information Network*. Committee members envision such a Web site to be the primary source for coordinating, accessing and disseminating Aboriginal information.

6.5 Impacts

The review found a variety of strategic, operational and other impacts as a result of departmental research activities. These were identified by departmental officials through headquarters interviews, policy input case studies and regional reviews.

6.5.1 Strategic Impacts

- ***Strategic decision-making has benefited from DIAND research***

- ***Departmental research has played an important role in obtaining increased allocations for certain programs***

Departmental research has facilitated a better understanding of strategic issues and has improved decision-making by providing senior managers with an understanding of the global issues giving them the confidence to develop timely policy responses. Some examples cited include DIAND's demographic research and other specific studies which helped in the development of *Gathering Strength*. Research conducted for the TLE policy review was also seen as directly supporting better policy decision-making.

Some research feeds directly into the policy process and is visible in Cabinet submissions. Demographic research in particular was seen as having helped build the case for increased funding for certain departmental programs. As well, demographic research provided management with the necessary results to confirm programming resource needs with central

[5]Industry Canada, Health Canada, Solicitor General, PCO, Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage, HRDC, National Defence, Fisheries and Oceans, CMHC, Justice and DIAND.

agencies. Another example comes from Youth Strategy research, which has supported submissions to central agencies to identify better resources for First Nation and Inuit youth programs.

The Demographic Research Initiative was also seen to be the impetus to make education a priority. As well, education reform was cited as an example in which research had contributed to policy change. It is important that such research continue, because it is likely to have an even greater impact in the future. Experts participating in the discussion group convened for this review believe that education will be the most important issue on the policy agenda.

Research on the Inherent Right policy has triggered further work interdepartmentally on funding issues, governance issues and empowerment.

DIAND's financial services officials have used Social Assistance research results to discuss fiscal relations and to support impact analyses of alternative FTA criteria on departmental activities. This research has provided benchmarks for monitoring progress in First Nations' socio-economic conditions.

Departmental research was credited with the successful negotiation of the Nunavut political accord. The pre-implementation research triggered additional research in areas such as the division of assets and liabilities, formula financing and east-west expenditure splitting. Other research examined the evolution of the concept of Aboriginal government, with issues such as organizational structures, guarantees for equal female/male representation and election models.

Land Management research has fed into the development of legislation intended to harmonize environmental laws between First Nations and federal, provincial and territorial governments. This work has also enabled DIAND to join with Justice and First Nations to research policies in the area of matrimonial properties.

Respondents identified both strategic and operational impacts from departmental communications research, such as polling, because it helps management to understand how strategic thinking will fit on the political agenda and facilitates the targeting of operational needs that vary regionally.

6.5.2 Operational Impacts

- ***A variety of operational research initiatives have supported short-term decision-making and enabled adjustments to programming and financial planning***

- ***Broad-based claims research helps the sector anticipate demands on resources***

The review identified a wide range of operational impacts from departmental research. Respondents noted that research helps operational decision making by ensuring managers have a general knowledge about the issues impacting on departmental programs and Aboriginal

communities when making adjustments to policies and programming. They also pointed out the value of demographic research in determining the implications operationally in terms of financial planning and programming.

Broad-based claims research such as the Prairie Surrenders project has helped the sector to anticipate demands on resources and given DIAND officials a platform from which to commence research for similar surrenders of land. In general, respondents viewed the impacts of land claims and historical research in terms of the validation of specific and comprehensive claims.

> *Research must be able to stand the test of time as cases proceed through the various levels of the court process.*

Respondents noted the importance of historical research in developing the position for cases going to the Supreme Court. Research is seen to be very closely tied to results in terms of having significant impact on judgments and strategy. Furthermore, research impacts on the claims process by providing benchmarks for negotiations.

The Custom Election Review triggered research into new alternatives to the use of mediators and arbitrators.

Research conducted for the Sahtu Dene comprehensive claim provided information that served to further environmental protection and a means to monitor the cumulative impact of land and water use on the environment. It also triggered a wildlife study carried out by the Renewable Resource Board, a public institution reporting to the Minister.

Yukon Implementation research triggered a considerable amount of additional research as evidenced by published materials in journals and RCAP documents. Points of interest have been the precedents set in displacing the *Indian Act* and the minority base of the new government, new financial arrangements and questions concerning jurisdiction and implementation of new laws.

Legal research has been cited in a Supreme Court decision conferring the uniform application of common law for Aboriginal rights across Canada. In litigation, this is expected to have an impact on the method by which evidence is gathered for future cases, which is at present precedent-based.

Additional operational impacts were identified by interview respondents:

- The Northern River Basin Study resulted in changing the approach to water management to a broader ecosystem approach.
- Economic research has impacted on the urban reserves policy.
- Natural resource regulation changes were in response to research.
- Research on residential schools statistics will help to target resources at communities most severely affected.

- The Child and Family Services study provided managers with a better understanding of regional variations in departmental programming and helped to defend the argument that provision of service in this area was comparable to that given by provincial providers.
- Research uncovered additional treaties in the Maritimes.
- Regional office security systems were adjusted on the basis of research findings.

6.5.3 Impacts on the Capacity of Aboriginal Partners

- ***Research partnerships have helped to build capacity and provide economic opportunities within northern and Aboriginal communities***

- ***Departmental research activities have stimulated further research within Aboriginal communities and organizations***

Respondents believed that DIAND research has had a large impact on northern communities, and the northern regions are far more attuned to research as a result of the processes used. This is particularly evident as a result of work in the areas of contaminants and water management. Respondents noted greater community capacity in resource management and suggested that community members are now better informed about issues related to food mail.

Other areas of the department such as the Research and Analysis Directorate and Specific Claims Research are also increasingly undertaking joint research projects with DIAND's Aboriginal partners which is seen to build capacity and provide economic opportunities. As well, respondents noted that the department has an internal policy for employing Aboriginal staff and adheres to the federal policy on procurement of Aboriginal contractors.

It was suggested that the *First Nations Effective Practices* study may impact on Aboriginal partners capacity since it followed a prescriptive "how to" format. Community level involvement in DIAND research projects has also been seen to have a cohesive effect in terms of building community consensus and research expertise.

Housing research has also supported the building of capacity among First Nations. It has triggered research within First Nation communities regarding the issue of treaty right to housing and helped to update Statistics Canada's demographic data and household projections.

Social Assistance research has been instrumental in providing new baseline data to the AFN.

As a result of work done with the Indian Taxation Advisory Board, some First Nation communities are implementing taxation regimes.

First Nation officials participating in telephone interviews believed that DIAND research has had a positive impact in terms of strengthening their requests for funding, better informing them for the purpose of negotiations and defining training requirements.

6.5.4 Other Impacts

- ***Public awareness of Aboriginal issues has been improved as a result of DIAND's research***

Respondents believe that DIAND's research outputs help to promote awareness in Aboriginal communities and among the public at large. Northern communities are becoming more pragmatic about health and environmental issues as concerns about contaminants and waste sites appear to be abating.

> *At the end of the day, we need to know if Canada is a better place for First Nations.*

Overall, research is seen as contributing to the results of policy decision making. Respondents suggested it would be helpful to assess changes in some demographic and social indicators as a result of DIAND's policies. For example, the community of Ft. Liard is no longer dependent on social assistance as a result of opening up oil and gas fields, and trappers in other communities are in the process of developing humane traps to market as a result of training which demonstrated the economic implications.

6.6 Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Review

6.6.1 Strengths of DIAND's Approach

- ***DIAND is seen as having a strong commitment to research***
- ***DIAND's research has added a strategic focus to executive policy decision-making***
- ***Aboriginal research partnerships have improved the quality of DIAND research products***

DIAND officials had little difficulty in identifying what they considered to be the strengths of DIAND's approach to addressing its policy needs through research. Respondents pointed to the department's commitment to research as a strength in itself. The recognition that research is needed and that good policy cannot be developed in the absence of good research were seen as evidence of a sound approach. Respondents observed that the conduct of this review of research itself is indicative of the department's commitment to research.

Some respondents noted that the positioning of the Research and Analysis Directorate within Policy and Strategic Direction showed a conscious decision to have research placed within the policy framework so as to provide input to senior policy decision making. They also saw this as indicative of a strategic focus at the highest executive levels of the department.

> *Everyone at the table has a positive feeling that the sharing of information has contributed to progress in...negotiations.*

The review encountered a general belief in all lines of evidence that there must be an increasing emphasis on research done in partnership with Aboriginal peoples. The

willingness to work with Aboriginal partners in a non-confrontational environment and encouraging these processes to take place was viewed positively by most respondents. In fact, DIAND officials believed that the increasing use of partnerships is leading to better research and success in negotiations. Regional officials noted that a tripartite approach to collecting and sharing information (with First Nations and provincial governments) has helped to build trust and expedite various processes.

Other strengths cited by DIAND officials included:

- competent and thorough individual studies
- good ecological and northern environmental research is made possible by having highly qualified scientists on staff both in the North and at headquarters
- extensive networking, repetition but no duplication
- planning and production involve stakeholders and results are disseminated to users and producers
- managers heading up research areas are proactive in determining client requirements and users are receptive to discussing needs
- research being used to bolster presentations to Cabinet
- high level of consultation both within the department and with outside groups
- research has enabled management to react quickly in satisfying needs in short term
- good communications network around the country
- reasonably strong working relationship between headquarters and the Regions
- the departmental system has sufficient flexibility to allow Regions to carry out effective operational research designed to meet the needs of their First Nations
- willingness to do the research required for policy development or program decision-making
- annual data collection at the regional level has enabled trend analysis which has in turn improved performance monitoring and supported regional decision-making

6.6.2 Weaknesses of DIAND's Approach

- ***Support for a sustained long-term research program is not highly visible within the Department and the strategic research agenda is not widely known***

- ***Time constraints do not always permit policy decisions to be based on a thorough analysis of the issues due to a limited availability of proactive research***

Participants in the evaluation were also able to identify weaknesses in DIAND's approach to addressing its policy needs through research. Foremost among these was the sense that there is no sustained long term research program and that the department lacks a well-known strategic research agenda. Some respondents attributed this to the research function being too diffused throughout the department and limited resources to support broad-based research. Many respondents thought the current approach to addressing DIAND's policy needs is overly reactive, with insufficient time available to address issues thoroughly. They noted that many issues which arise with some regularity (e.g., education, employment, housing, etc.) should be anticipated, with the necessary research "sitting on the shelves".

> *Good research takes time and money. If you're going to do it, do it right.*

Concern was expressed by some officials that Departmental policy-making tends to focus on issues of relevance to southern First Nations and not enough on Northern issues. There appears to be a desire to create stronger linkages between Northern Affairs scientific programs and core

departmental research and data collection functions. At the same time, caution was raised about the uniqueness of northern issues and the inherent sensitivities.

Other weaknesses cited by respondents included:

- research function is not sufficiently visible at the early stages of policy development in that factors other than the knowledge base often drive the policy agenda
- research not always put in a policy context (e.g., effects of baby boom on future employment and the implications for policies and programs; impact of off-reserve growth on the provinces; etc.)
- strategic policy should have more regional input
- the adversarial claims process is costly and inefficient
- Northern Oil and Gas is part of an administration reporting to two Ministers, organizationally located within DIAND, has less impact on NRCan policy
- insufficient resources allocated to developing accessible, easy-to-use core data
- decision process for policy research needs more direction from the top down
- there could be more headquarters/regional integration of research planning
- research information may not be understood by the intended audience of policy makers
- insufficient communication between policy and research units within DIAND
- corporate research tied to priorities (e.g., "achieving Self-government agreements") rather than real needs, but priorities do not always indicate what needs are
- departmental research would be more accessible if it were better catalogued
- insufficient qualitative data available, e.g., need to know if the quality of education is improving, but lack key statistics such as drop out rates
- communications links between the region and Headquarters could be improved

6.6.3 Examples of Best Practices

The research review identified a number of practices which have served to facilitate the effectiveness of research activities either within a particular organization or in general. Best practices cited were:

Early and Ongoing Involvement of Stakeholders and Partners

- trust and mutual respect are key ingredients to successful research partnerships.
- defining all potential stakeholders and giving them an opportunity to participate on all levels ensures the broadest perspective on needs and facilitates leveraging of resources.
- Audit and Evaluation practices which account for client needs and keep other sectors informed: i.e., get clients involved through a paper process prior to going for agenda approval at DAEC; ensure strong client input into terms of reference; form steering committees with relevant stakeholders; distribution of draft reports to client audiences and reflect their input in redrafting. At the end of the day, get a report that everyone can live with and then the process continues through implementation of recommendations.

- Arctic Environmental Strategy and the Northern Contaminants Program - restructured committees to insist that the Aboriginal voice carries the same weight as the federal government (DIAND, DFO, HC, EC) - levelling the playing field will get far better proposals and better working relationships - positive impacts in terms of community capacity, cost-savings (the high-priced scientist is not taking samples), and information is credible.
- joint claims research with First Nations and Aboriginal groups starting at the beginning with joint terms of reference and community consultations to ensure buy-in and prevent research from becoming adversarial.
- the Indian Claims Commission's visits to communities are often the first time that someone has gone to the community in the claims process. ICC-facilitated joint research projects have made DIAND more visible by incorporating community visits into the research process. This is seen as a stepping stone to building better relationships and establishing mutual trust in the claims process. Having DIAND see the land and hear the impact statements is what First Nations have always wanted. It removes the sterility from the claims process and introduces a human element.
- joint research speeds the process and eliminates the duplication inherent to the adversarial approach often taken in claims research. Having one researcher who has been selected by both parties eliminates the need for Departmental counter research and reduces the volume of research which must be reviewed by the Department of Justice.
- Review on Post-Secondary Education with the AFN - process will have joint terms of reference, joint call for proposals and joint selection of researchers - the objectives must be clear.
- respect for Aboriginal traditional and ecological knowledge.
- information sharing with First Nations through the *Resourcing Our Priorities* exercise, although not a traditional form of research, was considered educational and useful.

Taking a Broader Approach

- find the implications of research results for Aboriginal peoples at all levels
- look for the broader policy context when undertaking research to get the most out of the effort expended
- although most claims research focuses on the circumstances of a specific case, the review noted that broader-based research can introduce economies of scale by making information on the bigger picture available. While broader-based background research may be relevant to many aspects of the case, it is often considered to be an expensive luxury in terms of time spent and costs incurred.
- there is little dispute among the proponents of the legitimacy of oral history that oral evidence is the best that Aboriginal communities can put forward. Court recognition of the validity of such evidence provides a key impetus in the process of having its legitimacy recognized.
- First Nation communities and Tribal Councils have reported benefits from involving elders in research projects, particularly through documenting valuable information from oral histories.

Keys to Ensuring Quality Research and Effective Research Management

- clearly define objectives and research gaps
- locate frequently-used research material in the unit to minimize need to access archives
- peer review of research and partnering
- constantly try to improve the product and respond to client needs
- ensure research activities follow quality management basics for communication, packaging and advertising to maximize chance of having an impact on policy decision-making
- the NWT *Scientists Act* requires that all research produced in the North be licenced by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The reported benefits of licencing are: increased legitimacy for the research, assurance that adequate community consultation has occurred, and systematic recording and archiving of research reports. The process also ensures that all researchers are made aware of the *Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North* produced by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies.

Maximize the Impact of Research Results through the Sharing of Information

- an effective but not efficient practice, in terms of the time and resources required, has been the presentation of research results which makes a much greater impact on the audience - trade off between having a lot of exposure and good promotion to a targeted client pool
- Statistics Canada is a good example of top level involvement in research - the DM is actively involved in disseminating results in academic and interdepartmental milieus
- audit, evaluation and review reports are made available on the Internet
- First Nation participants in the review underscored the importance of sharing information emanating from claims research with other First Nation communities. For example, the similarities of the Prairie Surrenders mean that good information for one community will also be good information for another.

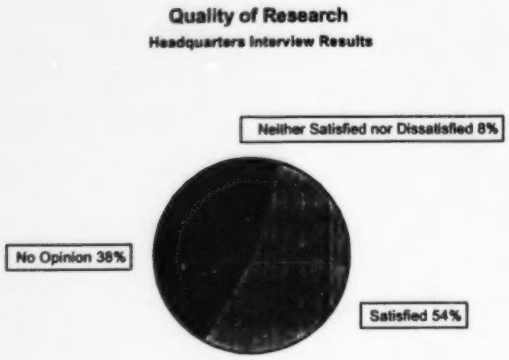
Ensure Strong Regional Linkages

- explicit requirements for senior officers to spend time in the North to get a first-hand perspective on the issues -- need this linkage with all regions
- networking between the NWT Region and headquarters on issue teams addressing claims and self-government issues
- cooperate with regional DIAND counterparts - make sure the link is strong in every region so that there is a solid information network.

We have consciously worked on ensuring this relationship is strong because although headquarters may have the global view, the Regions are on the front line.

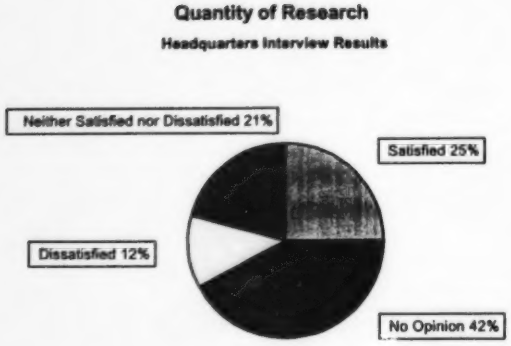
6.7 Improvements

6.7.1 Satisfaction with DIAND Research Activities



This section presents results from interviews and written questionnaires about respondent satisfaction with DIAND research activities. It should be noted that a significant proportion of headquarters interview participants were reluctant to give an opinion to the questions asked. Where necessary to enable comparison with the written questionnaire results, some allowance has been made in the analysis to compensate for this non-response.

Quantity of Research

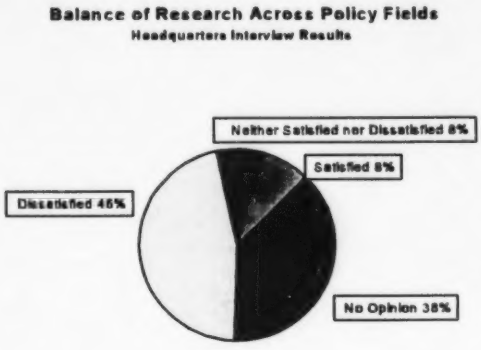


Over 40 per cent of interview respondents said they could not answer the question on quantity either because they either were not aware of how much was being produced or did not agree that quantity should be an issue. Another 21 percent said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quantity of research being conducted. One respondent in this category suggested that the rating would drop if the level of research continues at the same rate because needs are increasing and so should DIAND's research capacity. One-quarter of respondents were satisfied with the quantity of departmental research and 12 per cent were not. Comments from this latter group included the sentiment that not enough was being done to support good policy. Interview results were largely in line with written responses, as the large proportion of neutral responses may be capturing the "non-response" effect registered in the interviews.

Quality of Research

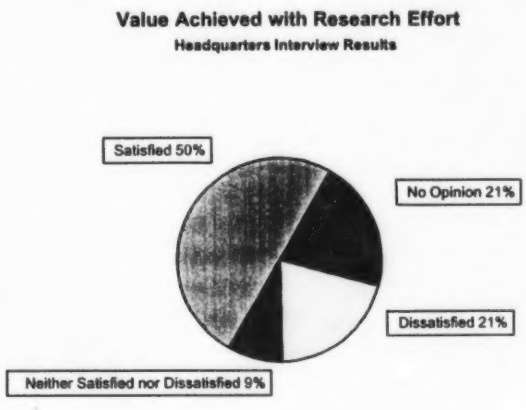
Almost all interview respondents willing to rate their satisfaction with the quality of DIAND's research were satisfied or very satisfied. Some respondents qualified their responses, pointing to excellence in key areas such as Northern Affairs program or Audit and Evaluation. The written questionnaires were less positive, especially in terms of regional responses.

Balance of Research across Policy Fields



Almost 40 per cent of respondents would not comment on the balance of research across policy fields, while three-quarters of the remaining respondents (46 per cent overall) said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction included: too much research associated with specific claims historical research/counter research process; lack of conceptual framework to define what the business is and the associated research needs in various fields; and, stove pipes in terms of the cross-sectoral sharing of research. This question was not asked on the written questionnaire.

Value Achieved from Research Effort



When it came to the bottom line, that is, the value realized for DIAND's research efforts, over half of the interview respondents were satisfied or very satisfied. They saw a considerable level of accomplishment given the limited resources available for research. One-fifth of the respondents, however, were not satisfied with the value of departmental research. They were uncertain about the extent to which research holdings are stove piped and saw a need to strengthen communications channels so as to improve the accessibility of information. Regional respondents to the written questionnaire tended to show less satisfaction than headquarters respondents.

The table below presents the responses from both in-person interviews and written questionnaires on these questions.

Table 9: Satisfaction among DIAND Officials with DIAND Research

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Other, D.K., not fair to rate
Quantity of Research being conducted by the Department: Interviews-Headquarters	8%	17%	21%	8%	4%	42%
Written-Headquarters	0%	40%	51%	9%	0%	
Written-Regions	0%	26%	63%	11%	0%	
Quality of research being conducted by the Department: Interviews-Headquarters	21%	33%	8%	0%	0%	38%
Written-Headquarters	2%	45%	48%	5%	0%	
Written-Regions	0%	26%	63%	11%	0%	
Balance of research across policy fields: Interviews-Headquarters	0%	8%	8%	21%	25%	38%
Value achieved with research effort: Interviews-Headquarters	12%	38%	9%	18%	3%	21%
Written-Headquarters	2%	40%	45%	10%	2%	
Written-Regions	11%	5%	63%	21%	0%	

Satisfaction among non-DIAND Respondents

The review attempted to assess satisfaction with DIAND research among all groups of respondents. The response rates were generally too low to permit statistical analysis of the findings. Basically, officials from outside organizations often felt that they lacked sufficient familiarity with the full range of DIAND's research products to provide an informed opinion.

Most respondents to the Aboriginal organization telephone interviews felt uncomfortable in rating their satisfaction with DIAND research. Among those who did provide an answer, there was general satisfaction with departmental research in terms of quality, quantity and value. Some of these officials said that demographic and membership registry information is useful for planning purposes.

6.7.2 Suggested Improvements

Research Plan

Departmental officials both at headquarters and in the regions pointed to the need for an integrated, department-wide comprehensive research plan firmly grounded on DIAND's strategic vision of the business the department will be in over the medium and long-term. A comprehensive plan not only reduces the risk of overlap in research activities, but also ensures that needs for broad-based strategic research are understood. Respondents said that the process for identifying research priorities must be visible and transparent. To translate the strategic vision into a comprehensive plan, respondents suggested taking a consultative approach to determining research needs, with input coming from individual directorates, the regions and First Nations. Some respondents believed the vision from RCAP and horizontal views should be used to articulate needs first. Others suggested vetting the research plan against the four major themes of *Gathering Strength*.

> *The vision must be communicated to ensure that it is ingrained completely in research activities and in the programs we deliver in the field.*

Departmental Research Advisory Mechanism

Most respondents agreed that there was a need for executive direction on research priorities. Less clear, however, was the mechanism which would facilitate this. Although respondents had a number of ideas, most identified reasons why new mechanisms might be difficult to implement. Foremost was their concern that senior managers are already suffering from "meeting fatigue and information overload". Respondents noted that the department already has two senior level committees for information management and audit and evaluation in addition to the two DM-chaired committees, Senior Policy and Litigation. They questioned whether there was a need to establish a third committee for research or whether research could be built into the existing framework, arguing that all three address the need for information in support of policy decision-making. Suggestions included:

- establishing an advisory board for research, including First Nations and ADMs or DGs;
- in addition to the Senior Policy and Litigation Committees, creating a DM-chaired Information Committee to oversee all departmental research, audit and evaluation and information management functions; and,
- create a coordination mechanism chaired by one of the DMs that would meet every two months to examine the overall strategic policy environment and the research effort supporting areas of policy need; membership should include key ADMs, DGs and RDGs.

Strengthen Communications Networks

Respondents from most lines of evidence noted that it is far easier to say research is not relevant if you are unfamiliar with what is being undertaken. In this vein, they emphasized the need to heighten the profile of research and make it more widely known, beginning from what is being planned and what work is in progress through to the dissemination of results and the analysis of implications for policy and programming. DIAND officials would support the establishment of a forum to discuss research that is either under way or planned in order to facilitate inter-sectoral understanding of research activities and the rationale behind them.

Respondents identified a need for stronger linkages between the data development and gathering function and research groups in the various sectors. They also noted the importance of marketing research activities and results both internally and externally and creating a central, "intuitively-accessible" depository for research documents and to offset the inevitable loss of corporate memory over time.

Interdepartmental Linkages

Respondents noted the importance of the Policy Research Committee to the research capacity of the federal government and the need for DIAND's strategic research sections to have a strong linkage with this committee. Officials from DIAND and other federal departments emphasized the need for DIAND to have a multi-faceted approach at the national level, and to establish strong communication networks with other departments.

Framework for Community Level Data Collection

The review noted a need for empirically-based research and the fact that good data are usually the limiting factor. The value of research is dependent upon the availability, quality and timeliness of the data collected, and respondents were concerned that research is under-resourced in terms of good data. They noted a great need to develop a capacity to collect data at the community level. They emphasized that a framework would be required to develop this capacity in order to ensure a data base of social as well as economic indicators. The need for community data was identified in most lines of evidence. First Nation and DIAND officials and the expert discussion group cautioned that Aboriginal communities are generally reluctant to be studied by researchers, unless they understand how the information will be used and can see the benefits and contribution to the community.

Aboriginal Research Capacity

Departmental respondents noted the importance of ensuring that client needs are supported by departmental research. With the move to self-government, respondents believed research activities should be directed to meet Aboriginal needs and mechanisms established to ensure that research ultimately comes under Aboriginal ownership and control. Respondents suggested carving out research for medium term needs that are clearly going to be there and working with Aboriginal academics to define longer term issues.

These views are very similar to those of the Aboriginal affairs experts who participated in the May 1998 discussion group. That group considered education to be a key area for future research, since education is viewed as a foundation for self-government. There was a call for the integration of local knowledge and languages and the development of new strategies for learning that reflect traditional values and customs.

Respondents from all lines of evidence saw a need for greater investment in the training of Aboriginal researchers. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships in departmental research activities would create mentoring opportunities which would help to expand the pool of Aboriginal researchers and strengthen research capacity in Aboriginal communities. The expert discussion group called for more Aboriginal post-secondary institutions which could provide alternative models for delivery of education, greater capacity for policy development at the community level and a research approach which allows greater community control.

Aboriginal telephone survey respondents identified a need for easier access to departmental research documents as well as information on research projects produced by other First Nations. Moreover, they indicated a desire for more funds to support projects undertaken by Aboriginal researchers. Some respondents indicated a specific need for funds to expand efforts whereby elders are involved in research in order to substantiate oral histories.

Respondents suggested that involving students in research projects or supporting studies in priority areas would be another way to help develop research capacity in Aboriginal communities.

Identification of Research Needs

Ultimately the Deputy Minister should be positioned to say what DIAND's research is and how it stacks up to policy needs. One suggestion was made that the research function should be managed as a line of business, with activities accounted for and priorities established strategically. The review found a need for a common understanding of "the corporate vision" for the next five years and beyond and the related policy choices as well as the resources and research required to support decision making. In this way research would enter earlier into policy development work.

Respondents also believed that a methodological identification of research needs would lead to a better understanding of the policy context within which research is conducted. By looking for the broader policy context, it was thought a greater value would be derived from the research effort.

Core Research

Some respondents suggested a greater level of integration of research activities would raise the overall profile of the function, increase coordination, minimize the risk of duplication and facilitate awareness of research results and research in progress. Other respondents made strong arguments to decentralize research to the diverse mandates at the sectoral level, where the subject-matter expertise is and where research needs are easily identified.

Regardless of the side taken, respondents acknowledged the need for the continuance of a core research function, with a central reservoir for data collection and research results, which would be the responsibility of a Director General.

Allocation of Resources

Respondents indicated that resources should be allocated so as to allow research to be undertaken strategically and proactively. They wanted to see less of a "fire-fighting, crisis mentality" shadow on departmental research and policy development activities.

Other Improvements Suggested

Some specific suggestions were made to fine tune various aspects of the research process:

- Create a repository in which to place unpublished "think pieces" not destined for immediate publication. Such work is normally to be found in various units throughout the department, but accessibility is restricted because of the limited awareness of work in progress across the sectors.
- Create and maintain a bibliography of completed research projects.
- Catalogue research reports by program area, disclose information on research in progress and identify project managers.
- Tie into the academic world by putting all research on the Internet and presenting results more often at conferences.
- Ensure consultants hired to do research have the technical skills and a demonstrated history in the area. Contracted research should be closely managed by managers to ensure the product meets client needs.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If the overall intent of this review was to determine the value obtained from departmental research, then it is fair to conclude at the broadest level that DIAND does achieve good value. At the same time, the review identified various steps that can be taken to ensure that these benefits will continue to be obtained and where there is a challenge to remove any obstacles or impediments to further progress. There are several areas which present DIAND with a unique opportunity to build upon its accomplishments to date and strengthen its relationships both with its Aboriginal partners and in the federal arena.

Foremost among these areas, the review found that DIAND's planning and research functions are highly decentralized. Most sectors believe the organizational structure to be appropriate, but recognize the need for greater centralization of planning to avoid duplication and ensure the relevancy of the Department's research outputs. To that end, many officials would be supportive of increased coordination in the departmental research planning process.

Recommendation 1

1. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a process whereby each sector and region of the Department prepare an annual research plan to be used in turn as input to a integrated department-wide annual research plan. Plans should address completed, current and future research. The process for preparing such a plan should involve the executive level.**

In the spirit of *Gathering Strength*, DIAND must make every effort to plan, conduct and interpret its research, whether large or small-scale, in full partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations. The review found significant benefits to derive from research carried out in this fashion. There are numerous examples of this way of doing business in the Claims, Northern, and Policy sectors. There are two levels of benefits in research partnering. The first is greater resource efficiencies through shared costs. The second, more significant from DIAND's perspective, is the assurance of buy-in from First Nations and other Aboriginal communities. Real partnerships should involve joint decision-making from the early stages of issue identification through the interpretation of research results.

There is a need for a visible and transparent process to identify research priorities deriving from DIAND's medium and long-term strategic vision. Such a process, to be successful, must have executive commitment from all sectors and regions within the Department. The process should be fully consultative and seek input from all sectors, regions and Aboriginal partners. This process would increase the profile of research throughout planning, conduct, dissemination of results and interpretation for policy purposes.

Recommendation 2

2. **DIAND adopt as a standard mode of operation research partnership arrangements, particularly with First Nations communities and organizations.**

This inclusive approach would ensure a commitment throughout the Department and its partners to fortifying linkages between data development and data use. Effectively, all areas would be "tuned to the same frequency" so that there would be an inter-sectoral understanding of DIAND research activities and their underlying rationale.

One of the underpinnings of a substantive research capacity within DIAND rests upon the accessibility of current and easy to use Aboriginal socioeconomic data. To date, this has been a serious weakness and it will remain so until Aboriginal communities and organizations can be convinced of the critical importance of such data to successful policy development. DIAND faces a major challenge in working alongside Aboriginal communities to gather and analyze such

data.

The review found a need for more empirically-based research and noted that good data are usually the limiting factor. There is strong support for more capacity to collect data at the community level. This will require a framework to ensure a data base of social as well as economic indicators. In order for Aboriginal communities to fully participate, the benefits of better information must be demonstrated.

Recommendation 3

3. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a review of potential institutional models to facilitate the coordination, identification, maintenance and collection of relevant and current socio-economic impact/performance data on Aboriginal peoples with other federal departments and Aboriginal partners. Such a review should build upon the work undertaken in this area by Fiscal Relations.**

In meeting this challenge DIAND has the opportunity to take advantage of its regional networks by ensuring that regional offices are kept in the research loop from design to interpretation. The regions have a closer working relationship with their local communities and are well-positioned to establish open channels of communication with those communities. Similarly, the Department should strive to open better communication links between its various sectors in order to lay the foundation for broad-based research. With that in place, there will be better access to reliable data and potential overlap and duplication can be avoided. The success of this approach will depend on broader involvement in departmental research planning as noted above.

The review found that there is no ideal organizational structure to optimize the linkages between research and policy decision-making. Good communication networks are the key and would be expected to result from the establishment of a clear and transparent process described above. This enables all sectors to buy into research activities. It makes good sense to have research capacity in specific areas such as Claims, Northern and Lands, where subject matter expertise is most likely to be resident. Good communication among these areas will strengthen planning for a proactive, integrated department-wide broad-based research approach. The review found a need to strengthen DIAND's ability to carry out longer-term research of general applicability. Without a commitment to building research capacity, there is no guarantee that sufficient analysis and information can be generated to support strategic priorities and policy decision-making.

The review identified the importance of a multi-faceted approach at the national level and the need for DIAND to establish strong communication networks with other departments. The review also noted the benefits of broad-based collaborative research within the federal government and the role of the Policy Research Committee in facilitating that agenda. Interdepartmental committees provide an opportunity for departments with limited research capacity to benefit from the input and support of departments with greater resources and more research capacity.

One key message from First Nation participants in the review was that DIAND research must be made more accessible and that more information on research being carried out by other Aboriginal communities would be of great benefit. DIAND faces the challenge of providing

With better data, enhanced communications and stronger partnerships, DIAND's research efforts will be more finely tuned to the needs and aspirations of its Aboriginal partners. This is part of the process of capacity building, which is one of the major needs identified by this review. There is significant support for a greater investment in the training of Aboriginal researchers. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships in departmental research activities would create mentoring opportunities which would help to expand the pool of Aboriginal researchers and strengthen research capacity in Aboriginal communities. There is much agreement among senior departmental officials and outside representatives for creating greater capacity for policy development at the community level and supporting the development of a research approach which allows greater community control.

Recommendation 4

4. **The ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction and the ADM, Socio-Economic Policy, Programming and Program Redesign undertake a needs assessment for appropriate institutional arrangements for conducting research in partnership with First Nations. The purpose of such institutions is to address both DIAND's and First Nations need for long-term strategic policy research regarding programming and service delivery issues, and to support the policy and research capacity of First Nations. These arrangements should build First Nations capacity to manage their responsibilities for the delivery of programs and services.**

The review found many examples of research partnerships resulting in economic benefits in northern and Aboriginal communities. Examples of mutual trust and respect in research leading to greater capacity and more autonomy in policy development within those communities provide impetus for continued efforts to promote such capacity.

Review of Departmental Research Activities: Getting Value from Research

Terms of Reference

March 1997

TERMS OF REFERENCE
REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:
GETTING VALUE FROM RESEARCH

BACKGROUND:

Different units across departmental sectors have mandates to conduct various forms of research. Targeted research is undertaken by specific programs for multiple purposes, such as policy development, claims research, litigation support, environmental issues, accountability and monitoring. Generic research is produced by units such as the Research & Analysis Directorate, Strategic Communications Planning Directorate, Finance Branch, Information Quality Research Directorate and the Department Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) in a variety of formats ranging from descriptive to analytical, to support the development of policy.

Recently, the department has undertaken a number of steps to assist in directing its research efforts. For example, some directorates involved in research have promoted formal annual planning processes and a departmental research committee has been established to enhance coordination.

The importance of examining departmental research in DIAND was highlighted during the Resourcing Our Priorities (ROP) exercise, which focused on rethinking how DIAND does its core business. In addition, a recent federal task force report on "Strengthening Our Policy Capacity" has recommended that all Departments review their policy research capabilities.

NEED:

The review is to provide information to senior management to assist them in strategically targeting and improving the value realized from departmental research activities. There is a need to highlight best practices in responding to constraints, and identify areas for improvement.

SCOPE:

The review of the department's research activities will be multi-sectoral in nature, involving both regional and headquarters perspectives.

ISSUES:

The review will address the following issues:

- What are the research activities of the department and how are they organized? What types of research are produced and disseminated?

- Is our research planned with and used by our First Nations partners?
- What are the department's research objectives, in the context of its operating environment? How is research used in the department's policy-development processes?
- To what extent are the current organizational structure and processes adequate?
- To what degree are research activities meeting the department's short- and long-term policy needs?
- What constraints do users and producers of research face and what are some best practices in overcoming them? (e.g., coordination of research, access and availability of data, consultation, quality management, ethical practices, etc.)
- What improvements can be made to obtain better value through the department's research activities (e.g., performance measures, working collectively with other departments and partners, sharing and dissemination of results, etc.)?

APPROACH:

The evaluation will be managed by a Senior Evaluation Manager, in consultation with an advisory committee. This committee is to consist of eight departmental representatives from the following units that either produce or use research: Research and Analysis Directorate; Information Quality and Research Directorate; Government Relations Branch; Socio-Economic Policy and Programming Branch; Policy and Research Directorate, Specific Claims; Research and Assessment Directorate, Claims and Indian Government; Northern Affairs; and one Regional Office. The DAEB representative will chair this committee.

The review will be undertaken by DAEB with the use of consultants. A profile of research activities, along with a logic model and the methods to be used to address the review issues will be developed as part of the planning phase for this project. Potential methods include: an organizational analysis which outlines the various actors involved in the production of research and their research mandates; self-evaluation form for participating research directorates, a written questionnaire for a sample of users of departmental research; in-person interviews with a sample of senior management and analysts; headquarters and regional focus groups; and one or two regional visits, and comparisons with practices in a sample of other departments or agencies.

TIMEFRAME & RESOURCES: The planning for this review will occur in April and May, 1997. A draft report will be tabled in autumn, 1997. The review is estimated to cost $65 to $75K.

APPROVED BY:

Deputy Minister
Department of Indian Affairs
and Northern Development

Action Plan

Review of Departmental Research Activities:
Getting Value from Research

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VÉRIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/27

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET — **Review of Departmental Research Activities**
REGION OR SECTOR / RÉGION OU SECTEUR — **Policy and Strategic Direction**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PRÉVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
1. The Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a process whereby each sector and region of the Department prepare an annual research plan to be used in turn as input to an integrated department-wide annual research plan. Plans should address completed, current and future research. The process for preparing such a plan should involve the executive level.	49	A Director-General's Committee (with representatives from all sectors and interested regions) on Departmental Research will be instituted to raise the profile of strategic research in DIAND and to promote a strong policy research capacity and facilitate linkages between strategic and operational research. The Director General's Committee will determine the form and content of an annual research planning process and how it should be communicated.	Director, Research and Analysis, Policy and Strategic Direction Sector	May 31, 1999 October 31, 1999
2. DIAND adopt as a standard mode of operation research partnership arrangements, particularly with First Nations communities and organizations.	49	Gathering Strength commited DIAND to renewing the partnerships with First Nations. All departmental centres of research will continue to do research partnerships with communities and organizations. The Director General's Committee will prepare a letter for the Deputy Minister's signature that encourages the continuation of these partnerships	Director, Research and Analysis, Policy and Strategic Direction Sector	October 31, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VÉRIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/27

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET **Review of Departmental Research Activities**
REGION OR SECTOR / RÉGION OU SECTEUR **Policy and Strategic Direction**

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3. The Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction lead a review of potential institutional models to facilitate the coordination, identification, maintenance and collection of relevant and current socio-economic impact/performance data on Aboriginal peoples with other federal departments and Aboriginal partners. Such a review should build upon the work undertaken in this area by Fiscal Relations.	50	There are a number of initiatives in this area that currently underway. The following is a brief description of a few: The Assistant Deputy Minister, Claims and Indian Government has initiated an examination of the potential for an Aboriginal information institute. Fiscal Relations is also continuing its exploration of how First Nations can be included in the Statistics Canada system of National Accounts. The Program Governance Branch's Results Based Indicator initiative will establish indicators for socio-economic programs and longer term measures of socio-economic well being in partnership with First Nations. The Statistical Services Unit, a joint DIAND, Statistics Canada, FSIN, Health Canada, AFN pilot project in Saskatchewan Region, will collect and analyse statistical data for use by First Nations and the federal government. Building on this and other work, the Director General's Committee (in consultation with the Aboriginal Information Management Committee) will consider options for additional study of cost-effective institutional models for data management with other federal departments and Aboriginal partners.	Director, Research and Analysis, Policy and Strategic Direction Sector	October 31, 2000
4. The Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction and the Assistant Deputy Minister, Socio-Economic Policy, Programming and Program Redesign undertake a needs assessment for appropriate institutional arrangements for conducting research in partnership with First Nations. The purpose of such institutions is to address both DIAND's and First Nations need for long-term strategic policy research regarding programming and service delivery issues, and to support the policy and research capacity of First Nations. These arrangements should build First Nations capacity to manage their responsibilities for the delivery of programs and services.	51	In response to Aboriginal groups' identified need for strategic and operational research to underpin their policy and programming, the Director General's Committee on Departmental Research will assess Aboriginal organizations' institutional capacity for policy research. This assessment will also consider opportunities for partnerships to strengthen policy research capacity within current resource levels.	Director, Research and Analysis, Policy and Strategic Direction Sector	October 31, 2001

Advisory Committee

Review of Departmental Research Activities: Getting Value from Research

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:
GETTING VALUE FROM RESEARCH

Victoria De La Ronde
Director
Research and Analysis Directorate
Policy and Strategic Direction

Pamela Keating
Research Manager
Policy and Research Directorate
Specific Claims
Claims and Indian Government

Sheilagh Murphy
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Sectoral Policy Division
Sectoral Policy and Program Devolution Branch
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Pierre Gauvin
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Corporate Information Management Directorate
Information Management Branch
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Claims and Indian Government

Lori Ransom
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Socio-Economic Policy and Programming and Program Redesign